ARABIAN SOCIETY

AT THE TIME OF

MUHAMMAD

PARTS I & II

BY

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FOREWORD.

THIS Treatise on Arabian Society at the time of Muhammad, by the late Mr. Pringle Kennedy, C.I.E., has come into existence in somewhat difficult circumstances.

My father-in-law, the Author, died while the book was in the Press. The Executor of his Estate, for various reasons, was not in a position to carry on the work of publication.

In fact, but for the kindness and sympathy of Mr. Hooper of the firm of Messrs. Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta, this volume would never have seen the light.

I venture to think that the readers of this, as of the previous works of Mr. Kennedy, will agree with me that a work of considerable merit and erudition would have been lost had it never been published.

It would be idle for me to say anything about the intellectual attainments of the Author, whose amazing learning, embracing almost every branch of Science, Literatuie and Art, was proverbial in Behar and Calcutta.

Owing to his lamented death, the correction of the proof sheets presented difficulties, for it was not easy to find one, with sufficient knowledge of the period dealt with, to check clerical errors in connection with the innumerable persons, places and incidents referred to in the book. However, the

Publishers, fortunately, were able to secure the services of Mr. S. Khuda Bukhsh, to whom thanks are due for performing this task.

It will not be extravagant to hope that the many friends of the Author will extend a cordial welcome to this—his posthumous work.

CUTTACK:
August, 1926.

G. J. MONAHAN.

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At the Time of Muhammad.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

LAW has been defined by Austen as a command and a sanction enforcing a command. Taking this as a definition, in one sense all communities have been largely governed by Law; but certainly not in the sense that Austen intended. For the command is not specific in the tribal or racial conscience; it has not emanated from any specific law giver; the English term Common law would rather apply to it; in primitive and indeed in fairly advanced communities a great, if not the greater, part emanates from the magico-religious idea of taboo; and the sanction, if it arises from taboo, is the working of the taboo itself; and in other cases disapprobation, in extreme cases expulsion from the community. The sharp distinction now drawn in Western communities between the disregard of law, which is laid down in ordinance, when proved punishable by a tribunal created by the law of a country, and right behaviour (breaches of which are visited by the disapproval of the community, in extreme cases going as far as boycotting the evil-doer) did not

exist in early societies, nor indeed does it exist in many parts of the world now. The assignation of the rules of conduct to a divine or semi-divine law giver in early societies is by no means primitive; the rule exists first, without any reason for the same, save that it exists; only subsequently comes the question *why* it exists and it is as a consequence of this questioning, by no means an early stage in social evolution, that the idea of a law giver is introduced. Still further removed from early thought is the defining of the law. The laying down of categorical rules to be observed indicates a comparatively advanced state of mental culture. The Hebrew decalogue, the ten tables of the Romans, the many early versions of the law in Greece, the laws of Manu, none of these can be considered as belonging to the very early history of mankind. And if any of these early written laws be examined, it will be noticed how rarely the sanction, Austen's sanction, is to be found in them. Take the decalogue for instance. In two cases only is there something which bears any resemblance to such a sanction; in the Second Commandment it is stated "The Lord thy God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," and the commandment to honour one's father and mother is enforced by the promise that thy days may be long in the land the Lord thy God may give thee, but the resemblance is very small; for the sanction here is

NOTE.—The Tenth Commandment which denotes a very different ethical standpoint from the others and is a curious puzzle; referring to a state of mind and not an act as the others, the first included, which seemingly refers to the worship of a god other than the tribal God that had led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

not human but divine. God will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children; not a human Tribunal will punish him that bows down to the graven image and serves it; then the promise of years being long in the land is one divinely given. Man has nothing to do with it. As regards the laws against murder and theft (including adultery as a form of theft) and false witness against one's neighbour; no sanction is named and as far as one can conclude, the punishment for an infringement was when the commandments were promulgated, religious rather than human. Earlier than any such systems of written law is the themis of the Greek where the law is laid down by a reference to the divinity not generally but with reference to the particular instance only. A number of cases similar to the Greek themis are to be found in the older parts of the Old Testament, particularly in the Book of Judges, and one can easily see why this should be. From a rule, as governing all cases: even such a simple rule as the prohibition of theft within a community, a general principle will logically come later into existence (just as we learn from early records it has come) than the dealing with and punishment in some form or other of an individual act of theft.

Now the Arabs at the time of Muhammad belonged to two distinct communities, with certain ethnical affinities, differing slightly only in race but altogether in habits, methods of living, thoughts and culture. The Bedouin, the dweller of the desert, was, at the end of the sixth century, very much as regards law in the primitive stage we have described. As to law he had none in the modern sense of the word. The one punishment, for a member of the community

who had broken the loose rules which governed the Bedouin's life, was expulsion. I do not speak here of blood revenge which operated even within the community and ordained that a man should take the blood of the man who slew one of his kin. This law of revenge certainly has from very early days been governed by special rules of its own. But apart from this when a Bedouin acted so as to offend the moral sense of the small body of wanderers to whom he belonged, the one thing the rest could do was to expel him, to prevent his tent being pitched alongside of theirs, his camels being tethered near theirs and keep him and his from the local springs used by his fellow wanderers. This, in those days, must have been ordinarily one of the most terrible of punishments. A tribeless man in Arabia, like a landless man in the Middle Ages in England, was helpless. Every one's hand was against him. And still, even to this day, the wandering Bedouin ordinarily can only force his fellow Bedouins to abide by the moral rules which prevail in their little community by disapprobation, and, in extreme cases, by expulsion. Unless some other wandering band will accept him, the outcast must live alone, the most awful of conditions in the Arabian desert.

The inhabitants of the town were more advanced in civilisation than the wandering Bedouins, but even they had no settled law. Apart from the rules of blood revenge, of positive law regarding their relations with each other, they had very little. Some they must have had, being largely merchants; but what there was, was much of the nature of early Teutonic common law; of written rules they had

next to none. But though in this respect the Arabs were much behind (if it is to be behind to be without written law) the Persians, the Egyptians and the Syrians living under Roman law, in other respects at least the townsmen stood the test of comparison well in the sixth century, with any of these races. To this day, the settled Arab is manlier than the Egyptian, Syrian or Persian. The first of all virtues, the Latin "Virtus," he has had always abundantly. He was a keen trader; and, where possible, a keen agriculturist. As to religion, Christianity and Judaism had by the Prophet's time permeated the country. The old beliefs were gradually wearing out. The Arab did indeed worship more gods than one, goddesses as well as gods, representing in some instances the Heavenly bodies, in other cases local deities and in still other cases of abstract conceptions. But Christianity, and more particularly Judaism, had got a great hold of the best and noblest of the people and the worship of the old Arabian gods was getting outworn. It was not Polytheism, so much as tribal pride and interests, which caused the opposition of the Meccans to Muhammad. The Arab is not by nature a persecutor and in Muhammad's earlier years, after his entering upon his prophetic career, of persecution he had none; though of the severe sort of ridicule, he had much. His townsmen allowed him to talk of the folly of worshipping their local gods as much as he liked. It was not his preaching of Allah but his preaching against their local worship which aroused their wrath. "Go your way and let us go our way" is what they practically said to him. But when after threatening a punishment in this life which they

persistently refused to take seriously, he threatened them with the terrors of Judgment Day and damned their ancestors to eternal punishment, their passions rose. And even then, the fear of a blood feud prevented an open attempt on his life. For a certain time, indeed, he and his clan had to retire into one quarter of the town and live there, as the Italian barons of the middle ages more or less frequently had to live, in a state of blockade; but at least there were no attempts of a serious nature to murder him or put him to death by any semi-legal process. Nothing shows more the tolerant nature of the Arabs than the fact that Muhammad was able for the greater part of the twelve years before the Flight to Medina to go about unmolested. Nor was this by reason of any softness in the Arab nature. One of the women of Mecca, a wife of a close relation of Muhammad, ate a bit out of the liver of one of the killed warriors after the battle of Ohod. This man had, in the previous fight at Bedr, killed her husband. But the savagery in the Arab nature is not an element fanned into action by fanaticism. Instances, indeed, there have been; the history of the Wahabis in modern times is an instance in point where fanaticism, in part at least, has caused this race to commit the most atrocious actions. But the hardness of the Arab, turning often to brutality, especially amongst the half Arabs of Africa, as exemplified for instance by the slave traders, is rather an innate trait, caused probably largely by the arid and hot country in which they dwell, than by any feeling of religious enthusiasm. Muhammadan history does tell indeed, time after time, of terrible massacres. But as a rule in these,

and this is specially true of massacres in which Arab Muhammadans have taken part, fanaticism has had but a small share. Rivals, in the Muhammadan world in the early days, inflicted terrible cruelties on each other's followers. After the death of the prophet, Mecca and Medina in the first century were captured and sacked by Muhammadan armies and every atrocity conceivable was committed; but the real driving motive in these wars between co-religionists was political, rival ambitions, or anything rather than religious fanaticism. An exception may be made in the case of the Kharijite, the extreme democrats of Islam, but these were largely guided by Persian or other non-Arabian leaders.

By the second half of the sixth century, Judaism had got its hold very firmly in the town dwellers of Arabia. Many professed the Jewish religion; and the leaven of Judaism and of Christianity, especially of Ebionitic Christianity (which was after all a half-sister of Judaism), had penetrated very deeply into the thoughts and consciences of the people. Sabianism, as a form of semi-Christianity, was everywhere to be found. There was a large quantity of vague Monotheistic religious feeling too, in the air, which Muhammad characterised as Hanifism, and on which his religious system is largely based. This Hanifism was a form of religion without any specific dogma except the belief in one God. Sprenger says that these people had a religious book of their own, the oldest Rolls he calls it, which was probably composed largely out of pre-existing sources (many of them legendary) not many years before Muhammad's birth. However this may be, it is certain that the time was ripe for new religious development

in Arabia towards the end of the sixth century. Religious ascetics abounded, and, like all ascetics, they had begun to see visions and dream dreams. One point to be noticed is that the dissenting sects of all extremes, who had been one by one driven by persecution in some form or another out of the Roman Empire, found no favourable soil for their doctrines in Arabia. The Nestorians of the east, the Monophysites of Abyssinia and the upper Nile, seem to have made no impression on the peninsula. The Arab is not a metaphysician. Like his language, he is direct, positive, and the metaphysical puzzles of present day Muhammadanism, the question such as the creation or non-creation of the Koran, are not his in the making. To Persians, Syrians and Indians sometimes metaphysical puzzles appeal, but not to the Arab of Arabia. Nor did they to Muhammad himself. He is described in the Koran as the illiterate prophet and whether we are to accept this as literally correct or not, it is certain that his knowledge of books was but meagre. Of Arab-written literature at the time there was but little. The constant repetitions in the Koran of Biblical stories do not show any great reading on Muhammad's part; indeed, probably his knowledge of the same was by his having these stories related to him by Jews or Jewish Christians and not from any study by himself of either any part of the Bible or of any of the literature founded therein.

Muhammad was, to use a striking expression, the man of the hour. In order to understand his wonderful success one must study the conditions of his time. Five and a half centuries and more had elapsed when he was born since Jesus had come into the

world. At that time the old religions of Greece and Rome and of the hundred and one states round the Mediterranean had lost their vitality. In their place, Cæsarism had come as a living cult. The worship of the state as personified by the reigning Cæsar, such was the religion of the Roman Empire. Other religions might exist, it was true; but they had to permit this new cult by the side of them and predominant over them. But Cæsarism failed to satisfy. The Eastern religions and superstitions (Egyptian, Syrian, Persian), appealed to many in the Roman world and found numerous votaries. But the fatal fault of many of these creeds was that in many respects they were so ignoble. Mithraism, indeed, was of a nobler growth; it had against it the fact that it sprang from the religion of the rival Empires of the East, Parthia and Persia, but it still appealed to many of the nobler spirits in whom the sense of the mystery of the world, of the feeling that the worship of the supreme powers consists in something more than ritual, was not lost. None of the rival religions, however, could compare, for one moment, in spiritual power with Christianity. Judaism might compromise with Cæsarism, Christianity *could* not and *did* not. The two could not exist together; and in the strife, though the advantage seemed at first all on the side of Cæsarism, time and the human conscience fought strongly for Christianity. The worship of Cæsar was blasphemy to God. To uphold this the Christian died in every part of the Empire, and everywhere the blood of the Martyr became the seed of the Church. But when Christianity conquered at the commencement of the fourth century it, in its turn, became Cæsarised. No longer

was it the pure creed which had been taught some three centuries before. It had become largely de-spiritualised, ritualised, materialised. Constantine presiding at the Council of Nice was the outward and visible sign of its being reconciled to the world, and from that date it became necessarily more or less worldly. From toleration to superiority, from superiority to persecution of other creeds were but short steps. And not only of other creeds. Heretics as well as pagans became equally obnoxious to the prevailing creed. Hypatra, the teacher of Platonic heathenism, was torn to pieces by a fanatical crowd at Alexandra; but before this happened the sword of the flesh had already been unsheathed against Aryan and Donatist alike. The heretic found his position unsafe throughout the Empire. In many cases the result was migration beyond. Nestorianism flourished in Persia, the rival world state. Donatism took itself to the lands to which the Roman army could not reach, in North Africa, and Aryanism found its resting place in the armies of the Goths. And where heretics did not migrate, where they still stayed within Roman bounds, as in Syria and Egypt, they everywhere were disaffected too, and taught disaffection towards the Roman Empire, as also towards the Catholic creed. And so, when the Arab invasion passed over these lands, the Roman soldier fought against it, but the people willingly submitted. If anything, the races preferred a Muhammadan to a Catholic ruler. The former was content with a tax, not necessarily very heavy, and left conversion to time and persuasion. Indeed, we find, within less than fifty years after the establishment of the Caliphate, an objection by the Muhammadan rulers

to too many Christians becoming Muhammadans, as this meant a reduction in the poll tax, whereas the Catholic ruler of Constantinople, however he might tax the heretic, never ceased to endeavour by more or less forcible means to convert him to the true faith.

In Arabia, Cæsarism obviously never had any place. Beyond the lands of the Kinglets, such as that of Ghussan on the confines of the Empire which was Christian and practically under Roman subjection, Arabia owned no overlord. The Arabian religion, as we find it at the time of Muhammad, was mainly a mixture of star worship and of certain more or less shadowy deities. The old worship of Baal, the Lord of the Springs and of the Watering Places, had long before faded away and become very attenuated. The worship of the gods, who had taken the place of Baal, had become largely a matter of ritual of holy places of pilgrimages at certain periods of the year in which trade found a greater place than worship. In such surroundings, Judaism found very favourable ground. If one wanted minute ritual, where was it to be found more than in the Judaism of the sixth century with its religious observances, its varied purifications and its set rules of eating and drinking? And as to real religion, well Judaism allowed as much or as little of this as the individual desired. It is to be remembered, too, that the Jews are Semites related in race to the Arab and this explains much.

The net result was that in Northern Arabia, at least, the followers of the Jewish religion, either born so or proselytes, were predominant. In Southern Arabia this was not the case, but still, even there, we find everywhere traces of Jewish influences. Next

to the Jews came the Christians. Those of Arabia were mostly of the Ebionite, Essene type with a very small number of the orthodox Monophysite and Nestorian; disputes as to Homoousian and Homoiousion found no echo in the peninsula. Everywhere was to be found the Rahib, the Ascetic generally, not necessarily a Christian Monk. Besides Christians and Muhammadans, we find in the Koran the Sabians mentioned as possessors of a revealed book and therefore opposed to the bookless heathen. Who these Sabians were has been much discussed. Dr. Sprenger thought they were dogma-less Christians, but the generally received opinion is that they were the spiritual, if not the actual, descendants of the Christian Gnostics who combined Christianity with Greek philosophy, Zoroastrianism and Oriental mysticism. Anyhow, as they were not the Hanifites, of whom I am about to write, they had but little influence in the peninsula. They are now represented by the Christians of St. John, a small sect numbering about 4,000 to be found in the swamps of the Lower Euphrates.

Amongst this community of various sects and creeds, a number of men declared themselves to be Monotheists only, belonging to no particular sect. These called themselves Hanifites. Hanifi—a word to be found in the Koran to describe one whose religion was that of Muhammad. Abraham was, the Koran tells us, the first Hanif. There is little doubt that Muhammad was greatly influenced by these men's teaching. Of them the most prominent were Omaya b. Abi Salt, Waraka and Zaid b. Amr.

The first seems to have had some idea that he was called to be a prophet. He is several times

referred to in the Koran, as one who knew the right but did it not. In Muhammadan tradition he is represented as a man of bad character and therefore unable to do great things. Waraka died a Christian; Zaid a Monotheist. All three were seekers after religious truth and taught alike the Unity of God. Islam as a religion was not developed when the latter two died and seems to have had no influence over the first.

If, indeed, Muhammad's creed had consisted in the Unity of God alone, it would not have gone far. It was what he added to this simple but in itself sufficient creed that makes him stand out as a great religious teacher. The giving of alms, as a duty, of a part of one's income to the poor and prayers at certain hours of the day are made in Islam parts of the creed and these it is necessary to observe in order to be a true Muhammadan. Such duties appeal to every one. The third main practical teaching of Muhammadanism, the fast during the thirty days of Ramzan, is observed by millions in the East. No matter in what part of the solar year Ramzan falls, whether it be a period of intense heat or not, it is a lesson, which when early inculcated, leaves a very deep impression on those who observe it. The pilgrimage to the sacred places, unlike the three duties mentioned above, comes from the days of paganism and is purely Arab in its conception; but all the same this annual pilgrimage, in which individuals from all parts of the Muhammadan world meet together, from Western Africa to China and the Malay Islands, holds the community together probably as no other institution could.

Muhammad's teaching that he was God's last and greatest messenger was probably of greater force in the days of its promulgation than now. To the Arab of the sixth and seventh century, the appeal to worship or if my reader prefer, to follow a person implicitly, had probably greater force than all the talk of the Unity of God or of the Religion of Abraham. To most of mankind God or the gods are far away, but persons are nearer and the human personality is that which attracts, inspires and animates. Though Muhammad is not a mediator in the Christian sense, yet we find he frequently mentions his prayers to God on behalf of individuals in the Koran, and no Muhammadan theologian would ever have the least doubt that in all such cases his mediation has been successful.

Away from all the great moral causes, leading to the wonderful successes of Muhammadanism, there was great material force behind the Prophet. Gibbon, in the second book of his Decline and Fall, sums up the non-purely spiritual causes which led to the success of Christianity. But whatever these may have been, and their action in any case was very gradual, there was nothing in them at all to compare with the non-spiritual causes at the back of Islam. When Muhammad fled to Medina, he had to his hand, besides the people of that town, his co-townsmen, who had fled with him (men who had mostly left their all, out of devotion to him and the creed he taught) and these men were Arabs, men accustomed to arms and the use of them. Add to them the proselytising spirit and you have a military *corps d'élite* of the first order.

The Nomad Arab had from time immemorial lived largely by pillage. The Pre-Islamic poetry shows nothing sweeter to the Arab of the desert than the stealthy tracking of the prey, the attack at early dawn and the carrying away of the spoil whether cattle, crops or captives. To be an expert at this, it was essential to have great powers of endurance also of undaunted bravery. Such races hailed then, with enthusiasm, a creed which offered them the opportunity of endless plunder. It was good enough when it enabled them to plunder the other tribes of Arabia, but when the riches of the Eastern Empire and of Persia were put before them as possible spoils, believer in heart or not, what Arab would be unwilling to profess a creed which offered him such prizes? But such offers would not have been enough, had it not been for organization, and such organization was the work of genius.

The three, Muhammad, Abu Bakr and Omar, seem to have been fit complements to each other. The enthusiast, very shrewd, however, where earthly interests come in; the even-tempered, even-minded man of the firmest character, and the fiery organiser of victory—all worked together with one single purpose. It is difficult at this time to divide the share of the political merit to be ascribed to each. All we can say is that without Omar and probably without Abu Bakr, there would have been no world-spread Muhammadan Caliphate. But for them Muhammad's mission would never have been conversion, tribute or death—nor his after fame other than that of a peaceful Arab missionary. Such fame, perhaps not so great, would have been purer than that of the Muhammad we know, who preached war upon

unbelievers, practised polygamy to an extent he did not allow to his followers, and allowed, if he did not actually direct, more than one murder. Above all he would not have against him the terrible massacre of the Jews of Koroyza. These Jews surrendered with the condition that their fate should be determined by one of Muhammad's chief Medina adherents. This man, who had been wounded in the fight against them, passed this terrible sentence, the males to death (there were some 600 of them), the rest to slavery, and this atrocious sentence was carried out. Muhammad is accused of having prompted the sentence; he certainly approved of it and a word from him would have prevented its execution. Indeed, the whole of the Medina period shows how power can debase the character of the purest. The Medina Suras have not the moving appeals of those delivered at an earlier period and contain many a definite law or rule, which, understood and carried out to the letter as they have been, are a heavy deadweight on Islam.

Muhammad's death was the most critical point of Muhammadan history. Would the power of his teaching that he was the last and greatest Prophet be strong enough to survive him? "Muhammad is dead, but God endures," so said Abu Bakr to the crowd in the mosque of Medina on that fateful day. The Prophet was dead but the work was left in capable hands. The most energetic brains and arms were to be found at Medina. A successor like Abu Bakr was an enormous help. No Arab could fail to respect this single-minded man who had devoted himself for many a long year to the Prophet. And

his intellect equalled his character. At once he saw that before foreign war, Arabia should be united, Prophets sprang up to be suppressed, not by argument but by the arm of the flesh. And suppressed they were. The invasion of foreign lands had to be postponed till this was done, but when finished, all Arabia was ready to march for the conquest of the world. Feuds, which sprung up later, were for the time totally suppressed.

The Galilean had conquered; the Schools of Philosophy at Athens, the last refuge of paganism, after a long decline, had been finally closed by Justinian. Orthodoxy reigned supreme in the Government of the East, where heresy as well as non-Christianity had become criminal offences, and although Aryanism still held its own, in various parts of the West, still it was ever receding before the victorious Catholic Church Militant, and so one would conclude that all was well with that part of the world, which lay within the limits of the Roman Empire. And yet this world was anything but well. Excessive taxation had crushed the spirits, as well as the industries, of the inhabitants of the most advanced parts of the Empire; heretics and heresies were to be found everywhere. The Nestorian in the East, the Monophysite in Egypt, the Donatist further West, all loathed the very name of Rome, whether new or old. Art had ceased to flourish, the intellect had become stagnant; the sixth century is remarkable for only one great series of masterpieces, i.e., Justinian's Codes, and these were mainly compilations; whether with the flourishing of law, lawyers flourished too, there is not enough material to tell, but the fact that the only subject which seems to

have been really studied was law, is not one which points to any great intellectual activity or material fulness. Even Theology, which in the two previous centuries had occupied so great a part on the human stage, ceased to be active; dogmas had been laid down; there was nothing more for the Theologian to examine. Such was the state of things at the end of the sixth century in the Mediterranean countries, the ancient home of civilisation. As regards the parts of the known world contiguous to the Empire, the Sassanide dynasty, in spite of the much-vaunted justice of Nushiriun, was on the down grade; intellectual life, such as there was, was mainly represented by the Jewish Rabbis of Babylon, whose teachings had spread far and wide, not only East and North, but also into hot, sandy Arabia. In this peninsula the people, by nature the very reverse to the over-superstitious Athenians, to whom St. Paul spoke, were gradually losing all reverence for their countries, religions of the past, dying creeds of which the only portions which seemed to have any new vitality were the foreseeing of the future by auguries and a vague respect for holy wells and stones. Judaism there, seemed destined to eventually become the country's creed. Christianity had no official support, though there was one Christian state, Ghazan, on its northern border. How in a few years all this was changed, how by 650 A.D. a great part of this world became a different world from what it had been before, is one of the most remarkable chapters in human history. And yet one must not conclude that this change was all change. The constitution of man and the facts of the time alike forbid. If the races that dwelt in

Syria, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and Northern Africa, had not been ripe for the changes which then came about, these would never have happened. Arabs might have conquered the lands around their own, but such conquests would not have brought about a different orientation if I may use the term of the races inhabiting them from what had previously been, nor would the new orientation have lasted until now. And this wonderful change followed, if not mainly caused by, the life of one man, the Prophet of Mecca.

As to this Prophet's life and work, I did not intend to write. Compared with the founders of other religions, Moses, Gautama, Jesus of Nazareth, the main facts of his life are well known. As regards these facts, no historical critic has ever expressed any doubt. Myth has gradually gathered around his character, as it has around almost every great name in history, down to Napoleon's; legends there are in abundance, but the main facts are absolutely free from dispute. As regards Moses, oral traditions for hundreds of years carried down his story before there was any attempt to put the same into writing, and its final form was only reached eight hundred to a thousand years after his death; with Gautama, too, a long time elapsed before any attempt was made to set forth the main events of his life, and this, added to the unhistorical bent of the Indian mind, has made attempt to get to the real facts of his life result in failure, excepting perhaps his quitting his father's home, his obtaining after many struggles what he believed and taught to be the secret of life, which secret is the creed of many millions now. Instead of facts we get into the region of Myth, and,

although we get closer to the founder of Christianity, the silence of the authors of the time, the secrecy and want of conspicuousness which marked the early history of its rise, the doubts as to the age of its earliest records, particularly of the gospel records, make many things dark in the life as now before us. But nothing of the sort meets us in the life of Muhammad. His comparatively obscure birth, his being nursed and spending his years of infancy and early childhood in the tents of the desert-dwelling Bedouin, his marrying a widow much older than himself, his putting himself forward as a prophet of Monotheism, his long stay in Mecca, and the persecutions he suffered there, his flight to Medina and acceptance by the people of that town, the gradual adherence to him of the chief tribes of Arabia, his return to Mecca and his death, all are as well attested as the doings of Frederick the Great or of Oliver Cromwell.

Whatever the opinion one may have, of this extraordinary man, whether it be that of the devout Muhammadan who considers him the last and greatest herald of God's word, or of the fanatical Christian of former days, who considered him an emissary of the Evil one, or of certain modern Orientalists, who look on him rather as a politician than a saint, as an organizer of Asia in general, and Arabia in particular, against Europe, rather than as a religious reformer; there can be no difference as to the immensity of the effect which his life has had on the history of the world. To those of us, to whom the man is everything, the milieu but little, he is the supreme instance of what can be done by one man. Even others, who hold that the conditions of time

and place, the surroundings of every sort, the capacity of receptivity of the human mind, have, more than any individual effort, brought about the great steps in the world's history, cannot well deny, that even if this step were to come, without Muhammad, it would have been indefinitely delayed. Monotheism may have come to Arabia, and from there have got the upper hand in the countries around, a law much of the nature of Jewish law, might have become the law of the races inhabiting these lands, in the course of time, but how long this would have taken, and how it would have come about, no one can say. In any case, however, a brief sketch will not be out of place, of the general historical conditions at the time of the Hejira and death of the Prophet, before I start on the immediate object of this study.

The Arabs of Muhammad's day, as those of the present day, may be roughly divided into two classes, the town-dwellers and the inhabitants of the desert. These latter, who were in a large majority, roamed from place to place, staying wherever they might find water for their flocks, adverse to agriculture or a settled life of any sort, with their only home, a tent, and their favourite occupation, war; mainly of the surprise sort.*

Amongst the virtues, they placed bravery foremost; next they prized eloquence, or its twin, poetry. As to their gods, they prized them, as they did their women, but little. No race was less given to devotion than the Bedouin; and this is true of them, as much now as then according to European travellers.

* The Rechabites of Bible history serve as good representatives of these.

No Muhammadan, save where the shadow of stern Wahabism has fallen, obeys less the precepts of the Prophet than the wandering Bedouin of to-day. He ignores the five daily prayers, the prohibition of wine, and, as to women, they still are chattels much as they were in Arabia before Muhammad's time. His is a life of sobriety not by choice, but by necessity. Arabia, a dried-up parched country, fails now, and has failed for many a hundred years, since the time indeed when the now empty, stony wadis were the beds of rivers, to give sufficient sustenance to the race. And so the Bedouin wanders, for ever hungry, occasionally he indulges in a great feast, and then his appetite is enormous. The leanness and barrenness of his country show themselves in his person. But if he should get a chance, as those in the conquering period after the Prophet's death had, to live rich abroad, he soon shows he is a lover of good cheer, good food, intoxicating drinks and unlimited women. In his own country the nature of things prevents these luxuries. Water courses run dry, and so he has to travel; his flocks, only too often, are insufficiently fed; and so is he himself; his bag of dates, which he has not sown but purchased from the settled inhabitants of the towns and villages, is often almost empty and has to be replenished by the sale of some animals out of his flock. All round is the hot sandy desert, in many places totally untraversable by man or even by camels; he journeys largely by night to escape the burning sun; of the joys of life, as we moderns understand them, he has but few. And yet he has pleasures which we may balance against those of modern civilisation. The air, pure as that of the sea, gives a wonderful

vitality to those who traverse the desert; the stars, which he knows as familiar friends, shine as they never do in Northern lands; beyond all things he is free, free from authority, and only responsible to the little community to which he belongs. The Turk of the present day he hates, for many reasons, but mainly because the Turk has attempted to put him under rule.

Muhammad tried hard to put down the old Arab duty of blood revenge, perhaps the most primitive of customs amongst the ancient Arabs, which we might dignify with the name of law, but his attempts, as far as the Bedouin was concerned, were but partially successful. The old feeling of the times of ignorance still survives amongst the Arabs of to-day. Law and freedom I have just named. No man is, or ever has been, absolutely lawless and free. Of positive laws, however, the Arab had but little; there was not the modern sanction of the laws, i.e., imprisonment and forfeiture of goods in the case of an offence against them, but in the place of these there was, and is, public opinion—a factor quite as potent. Amongst the small Arab democratic communities, with the Sheikh, the oldest amongst them only the chief amidst equals, public feeling is all-potent. Woe to the unfortunate individual who shirks the responsibilities which such public opinion thrusts upon him: the worthless one, who avoids carrying out, say, the obligations of blood revenge. Behind public opinion lies, as the last resort, expulsion. The tribeless man in Arabia, there are not often such, is the most miserable person imaginable. Every hand is against him, he has no one to call to his aid; in trouble, no one upon whom he can lean for support.

And if his expulsion has been due either to worthlessness or to his not carrying out a tribal duty, he has but little chance of admission into any other tribe; alone he lives, alone he dies. Such a case, however, is, and always has been, very rare; public opinion in the small communities of Bedouins being nearly always sufficient to make the individual members act according to the simple rules which govern them.

When we turn from the Bedouin to the town-dweller, the contrast is very great. From early antiquity there has been a great carrying trade along the South Arabian Coast and up the Red Sea. Much of the merchandise carried was the produce of Arabia itself, especially of the mountain tracts of Yemen. Southern Arabia had any amount of kingdoms, civilized in the modern sense, long before the advent of Christ, which not only exported their own produce, but also acted as important intermediaries of the commerce, which from time immemorial has found its way either over the Indian Ocean, or clinging to the coastline, from India and the East, to Egypt, Syria and the West. And this trade, travelling partly up the Red Sea in ships, was also largely carried on by caravans working up Arabia's western littoral. Whether land or sea took the greater part in this business, depended mainly on the political conditions of the lands traversed by the caravans, but when these were normal, by far the greater part proceeded by land. For such caravans there were regular halting places within a fairly short distance from the sea. And of such halting places, Mecca was one of the chief. The inhabitants of that town were essentially traders. As is the case, with all Arab towns, there were date-groves near it; it also had a sufficient

water-supply, without which it could not have existed; but the main cause of its riches was trade, the through trade between Egypt and Syria on the north, and the lands contiguous to the Indian Ocean, on the south and east. And so it can be easily understood, how when Muhammad after his flight to Medina, made the caravan route from Syria to South Arabia unsafe, he struck at the very root of Mecca's prosperity. These townfolk communities constituted small republics of their own; of positive law they had but little more than the Nomads themselves; family law, patriarchal law, flourished, but of community law there was (excepting as regards trade regulations) practically none. The towns themselves were divided into Mohullas (quarters) inhabited each by a few families; any one such Mohulla had but little to do with any other Mohulla, and so it happened, that family law was all that was felt to be necessary. Of large public works, excepting with regard to a common place of worship such as the Kaaba, there were none that called for co-operative effort.

The town Arab was always a keen man of business, inclined to scepticism in his religious beliefs, but upright and honourable, as successful traders generally are, with his intellectual abilities generally well developed. His relationship to, as well as his differences from, the desert Arab were well marked.

Of surrounding countries, Persia and Syria had the most to do with Arabia. The former power had had for a very considerable period a footing in Eastern Arabia, and had indeed in the most recent days before Muhammad, penetrated well into the

centre of the peninsula. The Persian was then, what he has always been, vain and scornful of all others. He had been, too, a first class fighting man, after his own fashion. The wars, largely successful, which he had carried on against the Roman powers for hundreds of years, attest this. Christianity, chiefly of the Nestorian sort, had spread largely in Persia; more important, however, was the dispersion of the Jews, who preferred occasional persecutions and general tolerance, to the steady pressure exercised against their race both by non-Christian and Christian Emperors. It is to Babylon, on the banks of the Euphrates, and not to Palestine that the Talmud owes its enormous growth.

Non-Jews may think this extraordinary work of the Jewish Rabbis, a monument of misused learning, but to the Jew it has been of as great practical use as a means of preserving his nationality, as Holy Writ itself. The Syrian, the other immediate neighbour of the Arab on the North, was not a formidable person in the seventh century. His country had been constantly the battle-field for Roman and Persian, but since Titus first and then Hadrian had harried the Jew out of Palestine, of political history he had practically none. Antioch, at one time the second city in population of the Roman Empire (it had long been surpassed by Alexandria and Byzantium), was perhaps the most licentious city in the world even taking Corinth into account. In it most of the orgiastic and often degrading religious worships starting in the East which swept from time to time over the Roman Empire took, if not their starting point, their first great outward impulse. And so it is not surprising that,

for a time, rising Christianity was confounded by the stricter Roman with those other forms, which came from the Orient. The Christian was first named so in Antioch, and the interpretation which finds its way into Suctonius is that he was so-called from their founder, not Christus the anointed, but Chrestos, literally the useful, but used as a word of contempt, the useless one. Later, when Antioch had acquired a great name for its position as the head of an Orthodox School in the theological disputes of the fourth and fifth centuries, it still retained its bad pre-eminence as regards luxury and vice. Altogether Syria was a country open to the first invader; inhabited by an unwarlike people, with, the exception of the Lebanons, no natural fortresses whereby an invader might be kept at bay, and but few strongly fortified towns. All martial spirit had long vanished; the Syrian was still a useful artisan and workman, but he had long lost the last spark of national feeling or of national *unity*, or indeed of possessing anything for which it was worthwhile to live or die for (except perhaps in the case of the religious sects).

Egypt again was very much like Syria, if not more so still. Since Ochus, King of Persia, in the fourth century before Christ, had crushed the last native dynasty, Egypt had had no independent political life. The Ptolemies were a Greek dynasty, and, however much the wiser amongst them had attempted to identify themselves with the people, Greek and Egyptian had but very partially mixed. Blessed with most fertile grain crops, the gift of the Nile, and with one of the greatest ports in the world, Alexandria, the creation of the great Alexander, Egypt had become of supreme importance to Rome as the

provider of grain to the people of Italy, and to the whole of the Mediterranean countries and the trade centre connecting the East and West. But the Egyptian himself benefited but little from all this. The wealth of his country went largely elsewhere. More than any other country, possibly under the influence of the numerous Jewish element, it interested itself in theology and in particular, in Christian theology. Isis and Osiris made way at a comparatively early date for Jesus of Nazareth and his Mother. Egypt was the land of Philo, of Athanasius, and of many another whose names shine resplendent in the pages of theological history. Nowhere did Christianity assume a more fanatical aspect; nowhere did the different followers of that Creed exhibit more intolerance of all forms save their own. It was in Alexandria that Hypatia, the last and most graceful of the teachers of the old heathen schools, was torn to pieces by an ignorant, howling mob. It was in Egypt, too, that monasticism of the severe ascetic type, as far as the Christian world was concerned in the East, took its birth.

The Thebaid was full of hermitages; sometimes of bodies of monks, sometimes of individuals, who had fled the world. On the Sinaitic peninsula the monasteries had already started, which are to this day one of the chief strongholds of the recluse monk. Cowards in every thing else, the Egyptian crowds were easily roused by the cry of religion. The Egyptian was the fiercest opponent of Nestorius and Nestorianism, and the compromise creed, laid down by the General Councils, was by no means pleasing to him. Although Catholicism might be the official belief of the land, there is no doubt the general feeling was

Monophysite.* To this cause of disaffection add the taxes, which, in the sixth century after Christ, very heavy throughout the Roman Empire, were nowhere heavier than in Egypt. The fellaheen of the time were about as well or as badly off, as they were before the English took over the country in the early eighties of last century.

And so it may be seen that all around Arabia, in Syria, in Egypt and in Persia, there was little chance of serious opposition when once a determined foe threw himself on them. As regards the first two countries their only help was in New Rome. This power had just shown an extraordinary vigour. Under Heraclius, an Emperor with a considerable genius for military affairs and great personal activity, it had succeeded in reconquering countries to the East of Asia Minor and parts of Syria, which had fallen into Persian hands. But the great strength of Byzantium lay in defensive, not in offensive operations. Against a powerful foe, its troops took refuge behind impregnable fortifications rather than meet the foe in the field. And so in countries such as Egypt and Syria the open land was left open. As to the strong fortresses when these were in populous towns, the disaffection of the inhabitants harmed more than the strength of the battlements helped. Persia alone possessed the power of persistent resistance, and thus the conquest of Persia was long and troublesome. And in the end, Persia partially at least achieved what Greece did; as the latter took captive her conqueror Rome, so Persia, when it

* NOTE.—Those who maintain that there was but a single nature in Christ or that the human and divine in him constituted one composite nature.

became Muhammadan, gave its impress upon the Creed of Islam. Within a couple of centuries of the Hejira, Persian thought and Persian men were probably of more importance in the countries of Islam than the thought and men of Arabia itself.

CHAPTER II.

Abu Bakr.

I.

In the early days of Muhammadanism one finds a struggle almost without ceasing between the Koreish, the aristocracy of Mecca and the other Arabs. This was quite apart from any question of town and country Arab, as to which I have already written. While Muhammad was preaching in Mecca before his flight to Medina, his kinsmen the Koreish had lent him but deaf ears. Abu Talib had protected him indeed, but at the same time had paid but little regard to his nephew's preachings and rhapsodies, and before he escaped to Medina his life seems to have been really in danger at Mecca. Thereafter more than once at Beder and Ohed, his followers had to meet in battle these men of the Koreish, who wished to put an end to their troublesome kinsman. And when he finally entered Mecca and the people declared themselves Muhammadans, there is but little doubt that this old Meccan aristocracy did so out of feelings of policy rather than of religion. But when it became evident that Islam was not to be simply a local creed, but a World-wide Empire this very tribe of Koreish, which had flaunted the Prophet and his teachings, claimed to be its leaders and that to them the profits of this Empire should belong. The quarrel never stopped, so long as

Islam and Arab rule meant the same thing. Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, belonged to the Koreish but was by no means its representative; the Koreish really triumphed when Mu'awiya, the son of Abu Sofian, the bitterest opponent of Muhammad became the acknowledged Caliph of the Muhammadan World.

The non-Koreish Arab feeling showed itself most strongly in the two towns of Kufa on the Euphrates and Basora on the Shatt-el-Arab, both inhabited by various Arab tribes. These towns, both founded shortly after the Prophet's death, were, for centuries, in one sense the headquarters of Islam. Here the sciences flourished, especially the Islamic studies of law and theology; in them the feeling was prevalent that the Koreish had wrongfully claimed for themselves the position of rulers in the Muhammadan World. The extreme democratic view, supported by much in the Koran, that all men are alike and that the Caliph, provided he were duly elected by the Faithful, might be of any race, hardly found much support there. The feeling expressed in many passages of the Koran that the Arabs were of all the races of mankind the noblest, was practically unquestioned; but the further doctrine that of the Arabs, the Koreish were the pre-eminent was fiercely disputed. And so after a very few years of union under the first two Caliphs, disunion broke out and the history of Islam ever tells of disputes culminating from time to time in civil war between the contesting elements.

More important even than this, though less noticed in the histories, was the secular quarrel between North Arab and South Arab, the Maadites and Yemenites. The words North and South are

very loosely used as many of the Yemenites, the people of Medina, for instance, belonged to the South Arabs; and the people of Mecca further south to the Maadites or North Arabs. These two races hated each other from time immemorial. The Prophet himself is said to have hardly escaped his races' prejudice. Hearing some one recite this verse, "I am a Yemenite (South Arab), my ancestors sprang neither from Rabia nor from Mudar," we are told, he cried out: "So much the worse for thee, thine origin cuts thee off from God and his Prophet." What the origin of this enmity was, no one knows. But that it existed and still exists, is undoubted. The North Arabs, we meet under the different names of Maadites, Nizarites, Mudarites and Kaisites; the South Arabs are generally named Kelbites. The slightest pretext was the occasion of bloody strife. In the district of Damascus, for instance, we read of a two-year strife because a Maadite had plucked a melon from a Kelbite's garden, and to this day the Nomads of the Arabian desert consider a member of the other race as an enemy. Of this hatred Dozy writes:—"The feud, indeed, was destined to assume an interest and an importance which it did not possess when it was confined to an almost unknown corner of Asia. In the years to come it would drench Spain and Sicily, the deserts of the Sahara and the banks of the Ganges with blood; ultimately this strange antipathy determined the fate not only of conquered nations, but of the Latin and Teutonic races as a whole, for it alone arrested the Moslems in their conquering path at the moment when they menaced France and all Western Europe." The inference may be in excess of the premise, but there is no doubt as to the influence exercised by this eternal feud.

The position of the Medinese helpers of the Prophet after his death may also be here noted. Their influence gradually waned. From the very start they were ousted from taking an important part in the annals of Islam and after Ali's departure from their town its importance gradually grew less and less till the sack of the town by Abu Moslim in A.D. 695 finally destroyed any influence it may have had. Ten years later we read of Hajjaj causing some of the old men (companions of Muhammad) to be branded. His pretext was that all the Medinese had taken part in the murder of Othman. He is reported to have said on quitting the town "God be praised, in that He has permitted me to depart from this the vilest of all Cities which hath ever requited the favours of the Caliph with treachery and rebellion. By Allah, if my sovereign had not urged me in all his letters to spare these miscreants, I would have razed their town and laid them groaning around the Prophet's seat." One of the branded companions on hearing this said: "a dreadful punishment awaits him in the next life"; his words are worthy of Pharaoh! In the thirteenth century a visitor to Medina enquired as to whether any of the descendants of the companions still lived there. An old man and an old woman were pointed out to him.

II.

The history of Islam, it will be seen, is only in a small sense, the history of Arabia, though, for the first two centuries, it is essentially the history of the Arabs. There are fertile portions of Arabia particularly in Yemen in the south-west, but the greater part of

Arabia is sun-burnt desert with rare oases interspersed. And so, as soon as Islam aspired to be a World religion and not that of a small Arab community, it was necessary that it should burst out of the restricted boundaries Arabia afforded and pass into the lands to the east and west, in which from remote antiquity, civilisations had flourished and religions been born and in some cases died. Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Irak, Persia, all these boasted of ancient civilisations, and it was only by acting in them and by them that Islam was able to take the proud place to which it laid claim.

As regards these countries the inhabitants differed from each other in every respect in nationality, religion and mentality. First of all in Persia one found an Aryan race with an Aryan religion and Aryan traditions reaching back for many centuries. This Aryan religion, like all other Aryan primitive religions, was essentially one of nature worship. Sublime and idealised as it had become, it was still (as the religion of the Eastern Aryans was in Vedic time), essentially a worship of the great powers of nature; the sun, the moon, the firmament and fire.

It will be found in the sequel that the conquest of Persia was one of the most arduous tasks of Islam; not only was there much fighting, but the penetration of the ideas of Islam, apart from its sword, was but slow, and when it, at last, seemed complete, when the Zoroastrians of Persia had become but a despised remnant, Persia took its revenge by thrusting its particular ideas into Islam and making them a part alike of its religion and philosophy. The Shiah side of Islam is essentially Persian, and

Sufi-ism, with its pantheism and mysticism, is largely the offspring of religious strivings, alien to the simple practical religion of the Arabian desert, and hence its roots are in far far distant sources. This flourished in Persia for many centuries before the days of the Prophet. As to the other lands, which felt the first onrush of Islam, there is one point which needs being kept steadily in mind. Alexander the Great's conquest had given throughout Hither Asia and Northern Africa a special civilisation, Hellenism as it is ordinarily called. These conquests were, indeed, only the occasion, for this new force had for a considerable period before them made its way, but the result was that everywhere, throughout these lands, it was an intrusive force. The old Semitic religions reeled and in many instances succumbed, before its pressure. The Jewish faith which survived its attacks had, before doing so, to go through days of great tribulation. The Arabian Chiefs had not only to fight the Seleucids at Antioch but also had struggles only less severe with their own people and although Judaism survived, and finally the Hellenised Jew lost his place in Jewish history, the Jew himself lost possession of his native land and was dispersed to all the four corners of the earth. As to Christianity which sprang out of Judaism, Hellenism captured it early, and when Isis and Osiris went down, it was Greek Christianity and not the Jewish form thereof, that took their place. Now we will find that Hellenism died hard, not only did the towns which were inhabited by Greeks or semi-Greeks oppose the Moslem invaders in a very different and in a more determined fashion than did towns not inhabited by them, but even when captured, the spiritual and

social influence of Islam was slow to penetrate. On the other hand, where the population was not Greek or Hellenic, the conversion to Islam, spiritual and social, was swift. The Copt of Egypt and the Syrian of Lebanon found himself much nearer to Mecca than to Byzantium. Both of them had embraced Christianity; a Christianity in which erastranism, mysticism and a dozen other isms of the East were intermixed, but all of which had one marked characteristic, hostility to the State, i.e., the Greek-form of Christianity. And Islam, offering itself, as really a purer form of Christianity, as the religion of Abraham, freed from polytheistic tinge, diametrically opposite to the Christianity of the orthodox Councils, appealed strongly to them; especially when it be remembered that Copt and Syrian alike, both racially and in customs, are not very far apart from the Arab. With him, they had much in common, with the Greek, practically nothing, and in the history of Muhammadanism nothing is more surprising than the ease with which after one or two big battles the Arabs conquered Syria including Palestine, Greek towns alone offering resistance. And there was any amount of difficulty and length of time which is to be measured in centuries before they reached further north and got any hold on Asia Minor, a country which has never been a unit, one inhabited by a number of various races, amongst whom, however, the Semite has never indeed been prominent. Islam gradually pushed its way along Northern Africa where Roman rather than Greek civilisation was dominant; then it crossed over to Spain where there was a profound chasm between the ruling race from the north and the old Iberian

inhabitants; but up to the time of the Seljuks, a Turkish, i.e., Turanian and not an Arab Semitic race, it never had a hold on Asia Minor. Muhammadan armies marched through the land, ravaging, plundering, sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated in struggles with the Byzantine armies; but of permanent possession of the country they had never. Only when the old expulsive force had gone and a new race from Central Asia took the place of the original soldier of Islam, did Asia Minor come under nominal Moslem rule, nominal I say, for the Seljuk's Islam hung very lightly on him.

III.

"The Prophet is dead, God is not dead," so said Abu Bakr when Muhammad's death was announced. What would happen no one could foresee. The Prophet had appointed no successor, no one to carry on his work, and then what was to be this work? Was it to be simply to spread Monotheism throughout Arabia, or was Islam to push its Arabian shackles aside and become a World religion? Burst its Arabian shackles, in one sense, it could not; the personality of its founder was far too strong, and to this day whether in China, in the East, or the Sahara, in the West, the Monotheism of the believer is joined to the observance of certain ceremonies, the obedience to certain legal rules and the reverence of certain symbols, which arose and could only have arisen in an Arabian society of the seventh century. But in another sense these shackles could be and were broken. As I have said before and shall have occasion to say over and over again, Islam only remained Arab in the temporal sense for the first two centuries of its career.

After this its dividing force might be Berber, Persian, or Turk; the great wave from Central Arabia had spent its force. But at the start it was Arab and purely Arab, and so when the elders, refugees and helpers, met together in Medina on the day of the Prophet's death, much more depended on their deliberations than any of them knew. The helpers, in whose City Muhammad had for years lived and which had been the first centre of his power, naturally thought that the succession was theirs. Unfortunately for them neither of the two leading clans, the Aus or Khazraj, could decide from which of them the successor should be chosen. If a chief had been chosen as these helpers wished, the probabilities are that Islam would have remained a local sect, one of the innumerable sects, which are ever arising and disappearing in the East. But the leading refugees had a far-seeing vision. To them the message of the Prophet was, if not a universal message, at least a message to the whole Arab race. It was essential therefore that the Prophet's successor should be one with broader views than those of the Medina chiefs, which would have limited its operation within narrow limits. And therefore it was necessary that one of themselves should be his successor. Who should it be? In after ages the Shiahs have declared the first three Caliphs as usurpers. Without going into any theological discussion, it is well to point out that, as far as the records show, Ali did not busy himself in these consultations immediately after the death of the Prophet at all. His chief concern (and seeing his relation to the Prophet naturally his first concern) was his father-in-law's burial. The Prophet was

buried in the apartment of Ayesha where he had breathed his last. Later on, a stately Mausoleum arose over his grave, but for the time there was nothing about the place to show that in it one of the great men of this World had found his final home.

"Who worshippeth Muhammad let him know that Muhammad is dead, but who worshippeth God let *him* know that God liveth and dieth NOT."

Such were Abu Bakr's words, when he found that the Prophet was actually dead. Such, indeed, was and is the essence of Islam, and he who uttered these words was certainly the most fitted to take charge of its fortunes in this dark hour. He suggested, indeed, at the meeting called to choose a successor, either Omar or Abu Obeidah; neither of these would have, however, at the time been acceptable, particularly to the men of Medina. Abu Bakr was of all the refugees certainly the one who by his character (his ordinary appellation the Sadiq—truthful, righteous, sufficiently shows his reputation), the most fitted to repress friction and to rigorously, and fearlessly, and thoroughly carry out the orders of the Prophet. His final election was much after the fashion of many a Papal election, by acclamation. "He is the successor of Muhammad," so said Omar; one after another of the assembled people took up the cry and offered allegiance till one of the Medina chiefs, and he sick on a bed, remained alone. At last he unwillingly tendered allegiance and the election was done. Ali, indeed, did not make his formal submission till six months afterwards; but he started no faction, raised no opposition. Of him, in the first two Caliph's reigns we hear little.

Dark, indeed, I have said was the hour and this for many reasons. First of all the Arab himself had never been conquered, never acknowledged any master. Assyrian, Babylonian, Roman, all had tried to get hold of the land and all had tried in vain. Outlying tribes might be conquered or bribed into temporary submission, but this was the limit. Yemen, indeed, Arabia Felix, with its high lying lands and abundant rainfall from the Indian Ocean, had been for some time in the hands of the Persians, as it has been in the hands of the Ottoman Turks, but after all Yemen is only a small part of the great Arabian peninsula. The great mass of the people never had had a common master. Then many of Muhammad's institutions were abhorrent to the Arabs of the day. Prayers five times a day, who can be bothered in this way? More irksome still, for the one could be evaded the other not, was the payment of the Poor-tax. More tribes than one prayed for its abolition. It is said that even Omar, whom we may consider as Abu Bakr's prime minister and director of his policy, begged him to yield or compromise on this point. But of compromise he would not hear. "Hold back even a single sheep and I wage unceasing war on you," he told the ambassadors of a tribe, who came with a request that they should be relieved of this tax. Then again quite a number of other prophets arose, who also declared that they had a special message to deliver. Of what this message consisted, we learn from Muhammadan writers but little, but seemingly they were all monotheistic, with a special claim for submission to the prophet delivering it. Against all these adverse influences, what had Abu Bakr

on his side? First of all the superior energy and belief of the principal Muhammadans, especially the refugees from Mecca, then the central position and the control of a great trade centre, Medina; and finally he alone was in a position to offer to his followers conquests beyond Arabia and with conquests, wealth. And so the history of the first two years of his reign was one of reduction of all the discordant elements in Arabia, of all the Arabian races to subjection and to union, preparatory to the conquest of the World.

The first concern of Abu Bakr's was with the expeditionary force, which the Prophet had ordered together, to make a raid into Syria in revenge for a defeat three years ago at Muta in which Zeid Ibn Haritha, one of his earliest adherents, had met his death at the hands of the Christian tribes of Ghazan. In the state of things after Muhammad's death, the expediency of letting this expedition go was in much dispute. Even Omar is said to have doubted whether the foice should not be held back for services nearer home. And another matter of doubt was whether it was safe to entrust its conduct to Usama, the youthful son of Zeid. He had been chosen for the task by the Prophet, but with the future so uncertain it did not seem a very wise act to confide a force, of which Islam might in the next few months be in direct need, to a youth such as Usama. But Abu Bakr had no doubts. What the Prophet ordered, that he would fulfil. "Were the City swarming round with packs of ravening wolves and I left solitary and alone, the forces should go, not a word from my master's lips shall fall to the ground." And

to Omar who desired in any case a more experienced general than Usama he angrily replied "Shall I depose one whom the Prophet has appointed?" And so the force went its way and was away for two or three months. It was only after all a foray, with plunder as its aim and no serious attempt at conquest. The motive of Abu Bakr has been understood by some of his contemporaries as not solely the one he openly stated. No doubt the pious Abu Bakr did not wish to leave any of his master's words unfulfilled, but at the same time the assembled force was largely constituted of men from Medina and from the Arab tribes, whom at the time it was better to have at a distance than nigh, and with their marching away from the vicinity of Medina, one dangerous element at least was for the time eliminated. On foot for a short way he and Omar, both accompanied Usama, who was on a camel; they then returned taking formal leave of Usama. In the annals of the times, other instances are found where the Chief, taking on him the part of a subordinate, professes obedience to the temporary Chief. Such obedience is, of course, only formal and means nothing. The instructions Abu Bakr gave to Usama (which are given in Weil's History of the Caliphs) are at this time worthy to be recorded: "Let never breach of faith or treachery be laid to your charge, mutilate none, kill neither women, children nor old men, destroy no date or other fruit-bearing trees, kill no cattle save what are necessary for your food. Spare any anchorites you may fall in with. If any man bring you food after proving it to be non-poisoned, eat it, mentioning the name of God" and so on. The humane nature of these instructions compared with modern German brutality

shows much to the advantage of these early Muhammadans.

While the expeditionary force was away the clouds grew thicker; bad news came from every side. Only one event happened favourable to the Caliph at this time, which eventually helped him much. Before the death of the Prophet, Aswad, a rival, had, by his preaching, caused Yemen to revolt. But in the days of his prosperity he forgot and used contemptuously the sheikhs who had raised him to power. He had taken to wife the widow of the Governor of Sanaa, whom he had himself slain, of such a marriage we read constantly, and in this case the widow sided with the friends of her late husband. By her aid he was murdered and the Yemenite sheikhs found it desirable to make friends against Aswad's supporters with the local Muhammadans. Yemen gave Abu Bakr at this time no trouble though we shall see it did again, later on.

In the meantime Abu Bakr was kept busy by events nearer home. Medina itself was threatened. To all offers of compromise as regards prayers, tribute and the like, the old man was obdurate, and so the tribes, notably the two neighbouring tribes, the Beni Ali and the Beni Dhubyan pressed on. The latter starting from Dhulkissa attacked the town itself. The attack failed and by a prompt counter attack, the attacking force was routed and Dhulkissa itself captured. The immediate danger was at an end and with the return of Usama, Abu Bakr was in a position to take the offensive. For this purpose he organised eleven armies to be sent in all directions. These effected the real conquest of Arabia to Islam. The work was bloody, but complete. There was no talk here of

the persuasive force of truth. It was the sword that decided. The sword was the great apostle inside Arabia, whatever might be the case without, that converted the Arab tribes to at least a nominal subjection to Islam. The strife was bloody; no humanitarian scruples hindered the one party or the other from massacre. The followers of the Prophet, where isolated, were put to death and when the Caliph's forces conquered, cruel deaths, such as, deaths from throwing from heights, stoning and burning, awaited the defeated opponents. Cruel was the age and it is no reproach to Abu Bakr that he was not ahead of his age. One deed is recorded which was an exception to his ordinary fairness. He himself, indeed, afterwards regretted it. A bandit, Al Fujaa, got arms from him on the pretence of fighting for the faith. Instead of doing so, he attacked and plundered alike the believer and the unbeliever. A loyal Chief, with whom he was fighting, suggested that they should go together to the Caliph. On his arrival at Medina, the latter, directed him to be burnt at the common burial place of the City without allowing him his say.

The history of the various actions by which Arabia became subdued to Islam is apt to read monotonously, but the work was very thorough. Beginning with Central Arabia up to the Persian Gulf and then sweeping south and west along the coast-line from Bahrein by Oman round to Yemen (which had again revolted) and the Hadramaut, the tribes were one by one subdued and forced into submission. The outstanding figure in this work was Khalid Ibn Walid. He had fought for the Koreish against Muhammad in his early days but

becoming a Muhammadan, quickly showed his capacities as a warrior. The Prophet, indeed, named him the sword of God, and a veritable sword he was; whether in single combat or leading troops to action. No labour was too hard for him, no toil too exhausting. To his valour and energy he added the most consummate skill, alike as a strategist and a tactician. But here praise of him must end. He was devoted to women, more even than the Arabs of those days, and they were in this respect keen enough; and not only so, for more than once he married on the day after battle the widow of the Chieftain he had slain. This was totally against all Arab ideas, and in one case to this was added the charge of treachery as to his conduct with respect to the deceased Chief.

Malik Ibn Nomeir, a Chief of one of the branches of the great clans of the Beni Temim, advised his people to submit to the forces of Islam. Being seized with his wife and a number of his followers, he was brought before Khalid. To the latter's questions he stated they were all Moslems. Confined for the night, he was murdered by Khalid's men; as to the details opinions differed, but the suspicion was great that Khalid himself had directed the murder. Complaint was made to Abu Bakr; and Omar was desirous of putting Khalid in bonds, if not for executing him. To this Abu Bakr objected. "The sword of God" was not to be so treated. His excuses were accepted though even Abu Bakr was forced to rebuke him for his conduct in marrying the widow. Omar all along believed in his fault and when he became Caliph, Khalid's career came quickly to an end.

Of the false Prophets, Toleiha and Moseilima were the most important. There was also a Prophetess, one Sajah. Her career in Arabia was a curious one. She came with a large following from Irak. She proposed attacking Moseilima and then married him having been promised the half of the revenues of Al Yamama as her dower. Evidently she did not approve of her husband or she got frightened at the fighting to come, for after a very short stay, she returned to Irak and history knows of her no more. Toleiha had to be fought and conquered. The decisive battle took place at Buzakha in Central Arabia. Stories tell that he himself was responsible for his defeat. Being asked whether any message had come to him from the Angel Gabriel (for this angel had now become the mediator with all the Prophets), he first answered, "Not yet" and then that the angel had told him, "Thou shall have a millstone like one to this and an affair shall happen that thou wilt not forget." On this foolish answer, his chief lieutenant ordered every man to his tent. His army fled. He himself went to Syria. Returning to Medina later, he was pardoned and won for himself a great name in the Persian wars. Far otherwise was it with Moseilima. In him, Khalid found an opponent worthy of his steel. Some of the greatest tribes of Arabia adhered to him. Against the first attacks on him by Ikrima and Shorahbil he was successful. The main Muhammadan army met his army in battle at Akubs. At first the followers of Moseilima were successful and actually entered Khalid's tent, but little by little the fortunes of the fight changed and finally Moseilima's followers retreated to a garden surrounded by walls. One of the Muhammadan leaders managed to scale

the wall and open a gate. The assailing army poured in and a terrible massacre took place, not one of Moseilima's followers is said to have escaped. They died with their faces to the foe, and terrible, too, was the loss of the Muhammadans. But Moseilima was killed and with him the last of the false Prophets.

After this the rest of the peninsula gave but little trouble, though there are stories of columns almost perishing by thirst and of miraculous deliverances. It must be remembered that a great part of Arabia, about a third in the south and south-east of Arabia, is one vast desert known as the Dahna, neither man nor beast live in it or pass it. Not even a bird is known to fly over it, so say the Bedouins. And so, when once the Persian Gulf was reached by the armies starting from Medina after Al Yamama and after Moseilima's band had been conquered, the forces of Islam had to march round the coast-line, meeting another force proceeding down the Red Sea to Yemen. Yemen had been in Persian hands, and though as I have said, it gave no trouble at the Prophet's death, it shortly afterwards revolted against the Prophet's successor. This rebellion was quickly subdued. More troublesome was the rebellion in the Hadramaut. Defeated in battle, the rebels retreated to a fort and defended themselves most obstinately. Abu Bakr irritated at this continuous opposition, directed that no quarter should be given. The leader, Al Ashath, entered into negotiations with the Muhammadan leader to spare ten specified persons. To this it was agreed and then it was found out that he had forgotten his *own* name. The Moslem leaders thought of putting him to death, but finally

referred his case to Abu Bakr who forgave him in a weak moment; this he regretted hereafter. In the Persian war later Al Ashath became a great champion of Islam. With the exception of ten, the orders of Abu Bakr, as to no quarter, were carried out. This practically completed the subjection of Arabia and from that day to this, Islam has been nominally the only religion of Arabia, though the Bedouin tribes have never paid much more than lip homage to the Prophet. In the next reign (Omar's) we shall learn that both Christians and Jews were turned out of the peninsula, and it is only in very recent times that any excepting professed Muhammadans have been allowed to live in any part of this vast country.

The whole of the conquest or rather re-conquest was the work of only two years; and the question presents itself how could so great a country be subdued in so short a time. The answer is simple, though it seems a vast country, the inhabitable part is really small and the inhabitants comparatively few. Away from the Dahna the enormous desert in the south-east, there are other smaller deserts in all parts. Man can only live where there is water; and there being hardly any flowing streams in Arabia, only in the propinquity of wells can human life permanently exist. And such wells are not in great abundance. Arabia has for a long time been gradually drying up and consequently its means of supporting a population has been becoming less and less. Probably there are not as many people there now as in Muhammad's time, and these people, if Bedouins, can still only maintain their existence in detached communities which are in no way attached

to any particular part of the country. Their ancestors have travelled in the past, they travel now.

Loot, it is not uncharitable to infer, was to the Bedouins of the desert, who were the soldiers though not the Generals or Administrators of Primitive Islam, as potent an incentive to attacking the surrounding countries as the desire to spread the doctrines of the Prophet.

The first onset fell on Irak. Part of Persia at the time politically, it has never been peopled by a Persian race. The Persians are Aryans; the inhabitants of Irak have always been mainly Semitic from the far off days of Hamurabi. Arab tribes, at this time, wandered through its length and breadth, some were, indeed, Christians. There were also many tracts there of extraordinary fertility, yielding the most abundant crops. Herodotus speaks of this land as one of the granaries of the World, and so it was when the Arab invasion came. It has needed the blight which the Turkish Government casts everywhere, to turn to a barren waste. The war here was between the Arabs and the Persian troops. The inhabitants seem to have taken little part. There was one Arab State, Hira, on its western boundary, which, however, opposed the invasion. Its capital was taken, lost and re-taken, before final victory came.

The leader of the Arabs was Khalid Ibn Walid, "the sword of Islam." Only second to him was Ibn Muthanna. The latter did not belong to Mecca or Medina and was a Bedouin of no particular origin. And so, although in the first rank when danger came, after it was over, he too was passed over. But that to him, almost as much as to Khalid, was due the

conquest of Irak is certain. Of the two and their deeds anon.

The political condition of Persia at the time was such as to invite invasion. Under Nushiriun, the last of the great Persian Kings, whose name is even to this day used in the East as incarnating justice, Persia's position seemed as great as ever. But all the same it was tottering to its fall. Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, commenced the work. In two brilliant campaigns he had penetrated into the very heart of Persia and forced an inglorious peace on the great Nushiriun who shortly afterwards died. And with the King's death, confusion began to reign unchecked in the Persian Court. The usual story of a disputed succession in an Oriental Court repeated itself. Eunuchs, women and courtiers with no capacity excepting ingratiating themselves with eunuchs and women, all intrigued, set up ruler after ruler, sometimes a male, sometimes a female, always a puppet. Several of these ephemeral rulers had already nominally ruled and been deposed when the Arabs in two armies invaded the country, the one led by Khalid and Muthanna and the second by Iyad. This latter army, however, was held up and had to be relieved by the first. Its march lay to the south and its first encounter was with the troops of Mormus, the Governor of the Delta. Khalid had sent a message before the battle to Mormus demanding his acceptance of the Muhammadan faith or the payment of tribute. The first battle, known as the Battle of Chains, was significant of what was to follow: on the one hand was the enthusiasm of the Arabs; and on the other hand, the Persians linked together by chains to prevent their running away.

What doubt could there be of the result? It was at this battle that the Arabs first saw an elephant in action, an animal which at first has always disconcerted an opposing army, but which after a time has always caused more harm to those who use it than to their opponents. After this battle there were other fights always ending in the same way until at last Hira (the people of which were Christians) surrendered. Of these fights, save one, no mention need be made, but this one, the Battle of Ullais, needs mention for what happened after. The strife was long and uncertain and Khalid vowed that in the event of victory the enemy's blood should flow in a crimson stream. And so, when the fight was over, the prisoners were brought to the banks of a small stream on which there was a mill and massacred one by one till the stream ran red. After this wholesale massacre Khalid marched on to Hira. With but little fighting this city, once the capital of a Christian Arab kingdom on the Euphrates, surrendered. By the treaty under which the town was handed over, it was stipulated that men, save religious mendicants, should pay tribute and in return should have protection. A typical story as to this surrender and of the morals and of the manners of the time, is told. Khirunma, Princess of Hira, was a beauty whose fame as such had spread far. One of the soldiers of Khalid claimed that the Prophet had promised him that when Hira was surrendered, this Princess should be his wife. The soldier now claimed the fulfilment of the promise and Khalid insisted on the same. The lady philosophically remarked that the fool had forgotten that beauty is not everlasting, and so,

when the soldier was presented with an old woman he was glad to get a sum of money paid him in her stead and return her to her relations. With the capital went the province Hira; this principality became the first acquisition of Islam without the peninsula. The great landlords (the Dehqans as they were named) also made their submission with the fall of the Capital. They were left in their positions on the payment of a small poll-tax. On the other hand, they had to acknowledge their tenants' right in the soil. All through its history, Islam has in theory at least protected the cultivator of the soil and in early days this theory was generally carried into practice. In other respects the terms to the country-folks were the same as to the townsmen, tribute and protection which was simplicity itself.

Having thus settled the affairs of Hira, Khalid found it necessary to relieve Iyad, the commander of the northern column, who had been unable to proceed further than Duma, where he had been surrounded by hostile tribes. This he did just in time. Their united forces defeated these and broke up one great federation, opposed to Islam and its Chief. Khalid, immediately after the battle, married the daughter of one of the hostile Chiefs and having done so, returned to Irak. From there he was shortly afterwards called to Syria under the circumstances I am about to relate.

The march of Usama had been nothing more than a raid, with plunder as its object. Far different was the new invasion of Syria. Though not as wealthy as Irak, Syria was on the whole a prosperous and flourishing country. The people might be ground down by an oppressive rule but the country

was rich and the climate good. The people, whether the wandering tribes east of the Jordan and south of the Dead Sea, or the cultivators of the soil are not greatly distinct ethnically from the Arabs. The Holy War preached against Syria at Medina found many volunteers. Its invasion was undertaken by three different armies, one of which went by the Gulf of Akaba to Southern Syria and the second struck further north and the third operated on the east of the Jordan. The chief command was with Abu Obeidah, who commanded the eastern columns, but he was only *primus inter pares* and mutual jealousies more than once hampered the action of the armies. Amongst the lieutenants were Amr Ibn Aas, a name later connected with the conquest of Egypt and reviled by Shiahs (as having played a foul trick on Ali as will be seen hereafter), Ziyad the brother of Mu'awiya who subsequently became the first Ommayad Caliph, and others well known in the records of early Islam. The army was full indeed of the companions of the Prophet and so differed from the Irak host, which was comprised almost entirely of Bedouins. This difference was full of importance for the future, when the unity of Islam was broken. Syria was the promised land of the Koreish. It was there that the old aristocracy of Mecca planted itself and the Ommayad dynasty (in its essence a Meccan dynasty) reigned undisturbed by foreign elements and in many ways paying but little respect to the teachings or ethics of Muhammad. The Abbaside dynasty, which succeeded it, had non-Arab elements largely at its back and with its succession, the purely Arab rule over Islam departed. Opposed to

these Arab invaders were the armies of Byzantium. In military skill these were much superior. The art of war was still cultivated in the Eastern Empire and only a few years previously Heraclius, in a series of victorious campaigns, had shown what the Byzantine soldier could do. In certain respects, however, they were out-matched. They had not the zeal, the enthusiasm of the Arab. By defeating him they warded off a danger, they gained nothing. Far other was it with the Arab; whether he was exalted by religious fervour or impelled by the hope of unlimited wealth, the desire for victory was an enormous impulse. And by his habits he had the greater power of undergoing hardships, of living on scanty food, of enduring the inclemency of the weather. Arabia had taught him all this. And moreover the country-folk were well disposed to him. They were certainly not well disposed to their rulers. And the conduct of the Arabs in their early days, their leniency in the treatment of the people (as apart from the soldiers) of the lands they governed, the moderation of their demands, all predisposed these people in favour of their kinsmen, the Arabs.

Khalid was diverted, as I have already said, from his conquering career in Irak. He crossed the desert by very much the same path by which from the beginnings of history the passage has been made from Palestine to the Euphrates, somewhere close to Carcesium (the same road that Necho, the Pharoah, took over a thousand years before) and reached the land of Bashan. There he found the Arab host. Quarrels as to precedence were in abundance. As tactful in such matters as efficient in fighting, he managed to produce unity. When the decisive

battle on the Jarmuk, a stream running into the Jordan from the east, took place his was the turn to command. The Greek army hemmed in by a narrow valley, was out-manœuvred and once put to flight lost more through drowning in the Jarmuk and the Jordan, than in the fight itself. It was only one fight but it was decisive. Towns had still to be taken and territory acquired; but no serious resistance stood in the way of the forward march of Islam, till the natural boundary of Syria was reached and when this was reached, it was centuries before any further advance of importance to the north took place.

Far different was the case in Irak where every piece of land had to be won inch by inch. After the depaıture of Khalid, Al Muthanna was left in command. Khalid had taken away a great part of the force and it was a wise precaution to send away the sick and the women and children to their homes. Mormus, the Persian General, attacked the small Arab force near Babylon but was defeated. The dangeı was great all the same. Abu Bakr, who was dying at the time, knew this and his last advice to Omar as regards Irak was, that reinforcemunts should be sent to Al Muthanna. Whether Abu Bakr was alive when the battle of Jarmuk was fought is doubtful. In any case it happened about the time of his death. The real story of the conquest of both Persia and Syria belong rather to the reign of his successor and I shall deal with it there. Sufficient to say that, at the time of his death, the position was this. As regards Syria the complete conquest of the country was yet to come. But the Arabs had already penetrated into it in various

parts, and even if the battle at Jarmuk was after his death, still everything seemed at that time favourable to the Arab invasion. As regards Persia, she herself was yet untouched, and though much of Irak had been over-run, what progress the Arabs would make there was doubtful. Much depended on the attitude of the wandering tribes, many of whom were Christians, but more on the Persian Government whether it would recover from the disorder into which it had fallen after the death of Nushiriun and restore discipline to the soldiers and steady administration to the people.

Abu Bakr died after a little more than two years' reign. These two years, however, were full of importance. In it Arabia was consolidated for Islam. The wandering tribes, indeed, did not have much knowledge of its teachings. Stories are told that a century and more after Muhammad, Sheikhs of the tribes made statements showing that they were ignorant of elementary matters of the new religion, such as the times of prayers, the limitations of the liberty of marriage and the like, but that the new religion was one whose followers regarded it as a duty or a right to conquer the surrounding countries and to live as conquerors there, this every Arab knew. Old superstitions might remain, but anything even remotely savouring of a religion other than Islam had disappeared, and with this disappeared much else. Pre-Islamic poetry is a very different thing from the literature of the subsequent period; it died hard but die it did, and any one who wishes to know what real Arab poetry is at its best, must have recourse to the poets of the Days of Ignorance. Abu Bakr himself well deserved the name of Siddiq

(true, truthful), such he certainly was in the truest sense of the term. One of the earliest of the Prophet's companions, he accompanied him in his flight to Medina and was his staunch supporter there. His daughter Ayesha was the Prophet's favourite wife. His son Abdur Rahman became one of the leaders of the revolt against Othman as will be seen hereafter and seemingly he inherited but little of his father's nobility and stability of character.

By ordinance in writing, Abu Bakr appointed Omar his successor. The latter had been his chief adviser during his Caliphate and was most fitted to carry on his work. One of his last words was to press him to send help to Al Muthanna, at the time hard-pressed in Irak. He was buried near his master, his head close to the Prophet's shoulder in Ayesha's house at Medina. Others came after him, more intellectual and with more genius, but none with a greater heart or a more noble simplicity.

CHAPTER III.

OMAR.

OMAR'S reputation was that of a strong, violent man. He was ever ready to raise his sword, whenever an obstacle came in the way of the propagation of Islam. When, however, he became Caliph this violence mellowed into firmness, and history does not tell us of any occasion in which he allowed passion to prevail over cool reason. His first announcement, after he became Caliph, did not go, indeed, far to reassure his co-religionists. "By God the weakest amongst you will appear as the strongest until I procure for him his right, the strongest amongst you will I treat as if he were the weakest, until he does the right. The Arabs are like to a camel with an ulcerated nose which follows its leader without pulling the other way. This leader must see, however, where he leads it. So I, by the Lord of the Kaaba, will lead them on the right way." Three measures marked his accession to the Caliphate. First, he expelled the Christians from the Nedj. This was the first step in a policy, consummated in his life-time, whereby all non-Muhammadans were expelled from the Arabian peninsula. Secondly, he ordered that within Muhammadan countries, Muhammadans and non-Muhammadans should wear distinctive garments. Thirdly, he permitted all the rebels against Abu Bakr, who had hitherto even though they had submitted, been kept from entering the armies of

Islam, so to do. Thus finally putting an end to the disabilities which had arisen by reason of the wars of the past few years. The whole of his life's work was to accentuate the difference between the Muhammadans and non-Muhammadans and to make the former the superior, the governing race. As for riches he cared little. In fact his measures went to prevent the Muhammadans from becoming over-rich; in particular they were not to become the owners of conquered land outside of Arabia.

Besides acts of general policy, one of his first steps was to remove Khalid from his command. This warrior was personally hated by him, and although the bravest of the brave, was remarkably cruel even in those days of bloodshed, and had a fondness for luxury common enough among the Arabs forty years later but at this time hardly known.

The first demand on the Caliph was for fresh troops for Irak. To the command there he appointed Ibn Masud who had readily responded to the call and offered himself as a volunteer in the cause of Allah. New troops were, indeed, badly wanted. Most of Irak, which had been conquered, had again been lost. Nor was the new campaign at first successful. In the first big battle the new leader was worsted and slain. The battle was called the Battle of the Bridge as the Muhammadans had taken down a bridge across an arm of the Euphrates so that the river was at their back and consequently for them it was victory, or death. Had it not been for their cavalry, which managed to keep the Persians at bay until the bridge was rebuilt, it would indeed have been death to them all. Unfortunately for the

Persians a revolt broke out just then at Madain, the Persian metropolis and the Persian leader found it necessary to depart with a large part of his troops to that town in order to put it down. Fresh troops from Arabia arrived. Omar suggested to those that volunteered for Syria to go to Irak instead. "In Syria," he said, "they do not want you, in Irak they do. It is a land rich with all earthly riches." But with all his persuasive powers, Syria was to most, the land of promise and levies for Irak were slow in coming. Still, they came, however.

The Persians now had crossed the Euphrates and at the next battle, that of Buwaib or "the slaughter of Ten," for many Arabs in it slew ten Persians, the latter were in the same plight as the Arabs had been in at the fight of the Bridge, viz., a river behind them which on their defeat became their most murderous enemy.

Soon after this the Persians elected a fresh king, Yezdegird. With his accession came to an end the constant setting up and pulling down of children as kings, by palace intrigues; with him, too, ended the Persian monarchy. On his accession he pressed Rustum, his general, to vigorous action. At first this leader proved himself too strong for the Arabs who had to retire to the west of the Euphrates, and so affairs continued till fresh reinforcements came from Medina. Omar had wished at first to take the command himself and only reluctantly appointed Saad Ibn Abi Wakkas as commander-in-chief. Under this general was fought the bloody and decisive battle of Kadisiya. The first fight lasted four days; and it was only on the fourth day that victory turned in favour of the Muhammadans; the second was shorter

but was really decisive. Amongst the bravest in the first fight was Mihjan, of the tribe of Thakif, who had been imprisoned on account of having given a wine feast in his house. Let loose by the gaoler's wife, he is said to have performed prodigies of valour and again to have returned to his prison after the fight was at an end. The poetess, Khansa, lost four sons in this battle for which she gave thanks to God who had distinguished her beyond other women, by granting all her four sons a martyr's death. In these battles elephants were largely used, but, as above stated, were of but little use, the novelty having passed away. After the second battle the Arabs founded Basora, a city afterwards of great importance in the history of Muhammadanism. It acquired the name from the white soil on which it was built.

Gradually but surely after these battles the Muhammadans pressed on, till by the end of 636, the country between the two rivers had fallen almost entirely into their hands. With the Caliph's full consent they laid siege to Al Madain, the two towns, which were the Persian capital at the time. These two towns, one Ctesiphon and the other Seleucia, stood on the two sides of the Tigris. On the white marble of the great dome which was the glory of the eastern town coming into sight, Saad, who had never seen the like in barren Arabia, exclaimed: "Alla-hu-Akbar—What is this, not the white pavilion of Chosroes? Now hath the Lord fulfilled the promise which he made unto his Prophet." The siege was prolonged, the king offered to come to an agreement with the besiegers that they should keep Irak but should abstain from crossing the Tigris. This they refused. Then the Persians silently withdrew from the western city. The

Arabs marched in to find not a soul there. But the victory had yet to be won. The Tigris laid between the Arabs and the eastern town, and there was neither ford nor boat. And so some weeks passed by, till a deserter pointed out a place above the town where the river could be crossed, either by fording or swimming. A small body of mounted men first got over and after a short skirmish made good their footing. The mass of the troops followed, the Persians taken by surprise fled and the Arabs obtained possession of this capital city without almost loss of life. Yezdegird fled sometime before this with his wife and family and retreated to the hilly country to the east. This city's importance as a crossing place to Persia proper can hardly be over-estimated. The booty was enormous. It is stated that each of the 60,000 soldiers received 12,000 dirhems of silver as his share. To Medina was sent, amongst other spoils, a carpet 300 yards long, on which was a representation of Paradise with the flowers, fruits and trees done in precious stones. Omar, instead of keeping it intact, divided it amongst the companions of the Prophet. On entering the Persian capital the Muhammadan generalissimo is said to have quoted from the Koran a passage concerning Pharoah and the Egyptians. "How many gardens have they left and wells and crops, how many wonder and pleasure places in which they took pleasure? We have presented all these to another people and neither Heaven nor Earth weeps over them." Omar did not allow the Muhammadans to hold Madain as their capital. Just as in Egypt he directed a new town Fustat to be such, in the place of Memphis, so here Kufa, west of the Euphrates

was founded and made the Muhammadan capital. It was after the capture of Madain that Omar organised a regular Finance Department (Diwan) which concerned itself, in the first instance, with the division of the fifth of the booty which by the law of the Prophet belonged to him, his family and the poor. Lists were drawn up as to the annual income the recipients of this * were to receive, starting with Abbas (the Prophet's uncle) and the Prophet's widows who received the largest shares, down to the humble followers who received the least. Also a fixed starting point was settled for Muhammadan Chronology, the first day of the Mohurrum of the year of his flight to Medina being chosen.

During the next year the Syrian Force was employed mainly in reducing various towns of which Jerusalem was the most renowned, though Hims was at the time probably the more important. The conditions granted to them, which up to the recent Great War theoretically existed, were the following. "Payment of a poll-tax, the obligation to entertain every travelling Mussulman three days, permission to the Mussulmans to enter the churches, removal of all crosses and bells, avoidance of all disparaging statements concerning Islam, non-riding on horses, and non-building of new churches." The conquest of Syria was completed in the seventeenth year of the Hejira. Within five years the whole of this country from Antioch to the Dead Sea passed into Muhammadan hands. This was only possible inasmuch as the people took no interest in the matter, leaving the

* Abbas was dead; but then his descendants received their stipends on the basis of what was allotted to him.

Arabs and Greeks to fight out between themselves as to who should be master of their country.

In Persia also, the Mussulman armies pushed steadily east of the Tigris into Persia proper. First was the gradual conquest of Mesopotamia. It is told of Hurmuz, one of the most powerful and valiant of Persian Princes, that having been captured, he was sent to Omar at Medina. When there, he asked of Omar as to whether he should be granted his life or not. On being given a doubtful answer, he asked that it should at least be granted until he had drunk a cup of water which had been handed over to him; on receiving a positive answer, he poured the water on the ground and claimed from Omar his life, in accordance with his promise, on the ground he never would drink that water. It was granted him but with the condition that he should profess Islam, which he accordingly did.

The years 18 and 19 of the Hejira were years of plague, alike in Syria and Persia. In the year 20 Yezdegird braced himself for a final conflict. The Mussulmans found Yezdegird's army entrenched well at Nehavend in hilly Persia. For two months they failed to lure them away from that position. At last by the stratagem of a pretended flight, they succeeded and in the subsequent battle the Persian power received a fatal defeat. All was, however, not over yet. A blow had yet to be struck against the centre of the kingdom. In the year 22 this was done and Ispahan, the old capital, was taken. After Ispahan the Muhammadan armies proceeded further and further east, until they were stopped by the deserts of Mekran. Their leader wished to push across these, but Omar forbade, a small army would be destroyed

by the enemy; a large army by hunger and thirst. North and south gradually were overrun and submitted to the arm of Islam; in some places such as Shiraz, not without bloody fights. By the time of Omar's death, Arab forces had swarmed in the north as far as the Caucasus and the Caspian, though the final struggles here came later. Yezdegird himself had fled across the Oxus and there he was followed by the enemy, who pushed as far as Merv and Balkh. Calling the help of the Khakhan of the Turks, this king, the last of his race, managed to besiege the Muhammadans for some months in Merv. Sieges were not, however, the strong point of the Turkish armies, and having failed to make an impression, the Khakhan returned and took Yezdegird with him.

The conquest of Persia was not as easily affected as that of Syria or, as we shall see hereafter, that of Egypt. Zoroastrianism and Islam are incompatible religions, and so long as the Persian remained Zoroastrian he could not be expected to be content with a yoke, which gave him, except conversion, no choice but of lasting inferiority. On the other hand, in Syria, Christianity was recognised by Islam as a religion of the book and certain forms of Christianity, at least, differed by light shades only from that of orthodox Muhammadanism. And as regards matters fiscal, the little finger of Byzantium was at the time heavier than the loin of Islam. The tribute then paid by the Syrian to the Caliph, freed him from further obligations, he was never free from the demands of the Byzantine tax gatherer. Added to this for many hundreds of years he had not had a separate political national existence, and one can understand the facility, almost approaching the marvellous, with

which the Syrian submitted to his new conqueror. The same may be said of Egypt. But as regards Persia, Sassanides were reigning when Muhammad was preaching. Although under a despotic rule, the Persians had a national existence of their own. And indeed they never easily submitted to the Arab yoke. Before the first century of the Caliphate was over, we find the Persian like the Greek in the days of Roman domination, everywhere as the servant of the Arabs in all civil employments and, where he was so employed, he was always found helping his countrymen, as against the foreigner. And the national form of the Muhammadanism of Persia, i.e., the Shiah, was largely adopted by them as being anti-Arab. The secular submission of the Persian to a sovereign reigning by divine right, may explain, indeed, the attraction which the Shiah creed, with its Imams, ruling by apostolic succession and with absolute power, has for the Persians, just as the open choice (in theory at least) to the Caliphate, appeals to the freedom-loving Bedouin; but this only partially accounts for the Persian's Shiahism, which is nourished by him largely as a protest against the Arabs and anything Arabian.

From Persia we turn to Egypt. There the people had for many hundreds of years been under foreign yoke, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman. No national unity, apart from religious feeling, animated them. And as to religion, the Copts were Monophysites (believers in the one nature, of Christ), whereas the Greeks of Constantinople were believers in the dual nature (Melkites being the name then given to holders of this belief, within the Eastern Empire). In the years 18 and 19 of the Hejira,

famine and plague thinned the armies of Syria. Amru, one of the Muhammadan generals there, asked and obtained from the Caliph a force of 4,000 men and with them he undertook to conquer Egypt. Omar, who was on his way from Syria to Medina, gave his consent very doubtfully. When he reached Medina, he called together a council of the companions of Muhammad in which the matter was discussed. There was as much opinion against, as for, the expedition. And so Omar wrote to Amru that if he received his letter before he entered Egypt, he should return; but if he had already crossed the boundary, to proceed. Amru got previous information and took good care not to open the letter, till actually on Egyptian soil. His progress once there, was speedy. Besides Alexandria only Babylon, a town on one of the branches of the Delta of the Nile, resisted him for any length of time. Makaukis, the Coptic leader, entered into a formal treaty with him. As to one term, the conversion to Muhammadanism, he and many of the others submitted; but the Copts remained Christian for a long period and it was only very gradually that the majority of inhabitants of Egypt left their old creed and joined the new. The tribute first laid upon the Egyptians was very light and compared favourably with the endless Byzantine taxes. Alexandria held out for a long time. Open to the sea, the Arabs could not hope to reduce it by famine. It was only after the death of the emperor Heraclius when disputes as to the succession in Constantinople prevented help from coming, that the Greek garrison lost heart and the place was taken (Dec. 641). In the face of Amru's advice, Omar, who insisted on gaining the people of this great city to his

administration by mildness, left them in full possession of their property, only demanding from them a moderate tribute besides the poll-tax, which was paid by all the Egyptians.

Amru wished to make Alexandria his capital; but this Omar would not permit. Nor would he allow Memphis, the secular capital of Egypt, to be such. The Caliph's great idea, as regards his conquering Arabs, was to keep them free from the soil. They were ever to be ready to march from country to country if necessary, and consequently anything like settled stone or brick-built towns as their residence was abhorrent to him. The tent alone was to be their home. And so there was a new capital Cairo (Kahirah, i.e., victory), the old Cairo of to-day. It was erected on the site where the Muhammadan army had encamped when it besieged Babylon. This was originally a town of tents and only little by little became one of bricks and mortar. Another part of Omar's policy was that Egypt, with its fertile harvests, should feed barren Medina. For this end, caravan after caravan of corn was sent from the one country to Arabia, so that, to use the words of oriental exaggeration, the string of camels was so great that the first had reached Medina before the last had left Egypt. For this end, too, Amru repaired the canals between the Nile Delta and the Gulf of Suez which had gone out of repair and made them passable for ships of moderate burden. All these things needed money, and consequently Muhammadan rule in Egypt which began with moderate taxation, and accordingly stood in favourable comparison with Byzantine oppression, in a short time, became as oppressive as the former.

After Egypt came the turn of Barca and Tripoli; both after a short campaign came under Amru's rule; but here for the time, the western flood of Islam ended. Omar forbade further conquests. He never loved Amru, who indeed was of a very extravagant, luxurious nature quite opposed to the austerity of Omar. And in the latter's letters reproach was added to reproach, because Amru did not extract as large an income from Egypt, as had been done in ancient Syria. In vain did the latter offer to resign. The demand upon him came all the same. At last Omar nominated Abdallah Ibn Ali Sarh as his Vice-regent in Egypt and Faiyum. Before, however, this change was carried out, Omar was dead. Even more rigorous treatment was meted out by the Caliph to Khalid. This warrior, "the Lion of Islam," was, as has been above stated, of very luxurious habits. He had amassed in his successful campaigns a large fortune, the greater part of this, however, Omar forced him to disgorge.

The Caliph's support of the Governors of the provinces in their most arbitrary measures brought about his death. An inhabitant of Firuz travelled to Medina to petition against the exactions of the local Governor. Obtaining no redress he awaited his opportunity; one morning when Omar came into the great Mosque at Medina, this man, who was standing in the first row of the Muhammadans who had arranged themselves for prayer, sprang out of the rank and inflicted on Omar a wound which turned out to be fatal. Omar, when he learnt he had but a short time to live, turned his thoughts to the appointment of a successor. First of all, he sent for Abdur Rahman, who declined the office. Then, instead of himself

selecting a successor, he named six of the oldest companions of Muhammad. Ali, Othman, Abdur Rahman, Al-Zubeir, Talha and Saad Ibn Wakkas, as electors. His last desire to be buried by the side of the Prophet was carried out. There are different accounts as to his age, some stating it to be 59, some 66. The date of his death was the 3rd of November 644 in the 23rd year after the flight. With his death, the unity of Islam ceased. However heroic and brave Ali might have been, he was not able to keep the contending factions amongst the Arab aristocracy at rest, as Abu Bakr and Omar had done. The fair inference, from all that we learn of the times, is, that the first great spiritual wave, which had carried Islam far and wide, was now at its ebb and that in the future, worldly calculations supplanted religious enthusiasm. Weil's opinion of Omar is that not only during his Caliphate but throughout that of Abu Bakr, and indeed, during the last few years of Muhammad's life, Omar was really the guiding spirit of Islam. The prohibition against wine drinking; directions that women should be veiled; the punishment of idolaters with death, all of which are in the Koran, were due to Omar's influence. He was so firm and unbending, indeed, that the Prophet more than once, as when he wanted the execution of a Medina chief, had to restrain him; but if stern to others, he was so to himself and his own family. His son, found drinking wine, had to undergo the flogging ordained for such offences. In one respect only, we find him wanting. He had favourites, notably Moghira, a man who, to avoid the wrath of the relations of one whom he had murdered, had

joined himself to Islam. On the other hand, Ali, Khalid, Amru, three men who, more than any, had propagated Islam, were one and all cordially disliked by him. In spite of this, however, he remains the greatest of all the Caliphs, the most sober-minded and yet exalted statesman of them all, who knew his own limitations and those of his people, and also his and their strength. After his death Islam had no more internal peace.

CHAPTER IV.

OTHMAN.

THE murder of Omar marks the termination of a period in the history of Islam. Under his predecessor and himself, the great overflow of Arabia on the world around, had taken place. To the great religious impulse, which animated the companions and assistants of the Prophet, had been added the motives of plunder and conquest. The companions of his flight, the assistants of Medina were certainly influenced entirely, or almost entirely, by religious non-worldly motives. None of these who left their homes at Mecca and repaired to the Prophet, when an exile in Medina, can possibly have been animated by any other, though it has been suggested that a desire to find an arbitrator, as to their internal disputes, may have had a place. And the citizens of Medina who welcomed him in their midst can hardly have had any other. But this was not the case with these Meccans, who only accepted the Prophet's teaching after he had become a power. The Koreish, the proud aristocracy of Mecca, accepted him, it is true, but except in the case of those who were his former supporters, they accepted him rather as a Ruler than as their religious teacher, under whom they could shelter themselves while claiming authority over other Arabs. And as for the residents of the Desert I have already pointed out that religion hangs very lightly on them. Except when an

external force such as Wahabism, has pressed, their religion is even to this day of the very slightest. Nor, as regards the mass of them, is there any evidence that they were more inclined to religious belief and religious practise in the seventh century than now. Indeed, all the evidence goes the other way. Coerced by Abu Bakr, they accepted Islam ; inspired by the hope of endless loot, by an escape from their barren lands to the fertile countries around them, they composed the vast majority of the Muhammadan armies. As stated above, Omar had removed the bar Abu Bakr had laid on those who had fought against him and peımitted their recruitment in the armies of Islam. This had a wonderful result. Occasionally we read, indeed, of the warriors rushing to a certain fate with the cry that they saw the pleasures of paradise approach, but I do not fancy I am wrong, when I say that the old Arab love of fighting, the desire to die in battle rather than on the bed, as described in much of the old Arab poetry, had more to do with their daring in battle than any problematical future life. The Arabic language itself, with its want of future tense, is a true indication that to the Arab, the future was of but little consequence compared with the present and past.

Now by the time of the death of Omar religious impulse, whatever there had been, had been largely spent. The number of the companions and assistants was steadily decreasing, and the joys of the present world had become a stumbling block to many. As long as Omar lived, indeed theocracy was still all-powerful. He was the chief of the Faithful, the successor of the Prophet and before him every voice was hushed. Khalid was impotent in his

presence; Amru, the conqueror of Egypt, had to submit to the harshest of rebukes. As he said at his succession "By the Lord of the Kaaba he would lead them in the right way" and so he had acted. But now the strong hand was withdrawn; the enmity between north and south, between Koreish and Yemenite, will break out again; the Koreish will claim the chief share of the conquests and the rule of the countries conquered. They will further rule as heathen Monarchs, as the Persian and Byzantine sovereigns did, with but little reference to the religion they professed and the Bedouin will fiercely contest their sway. Only a minority will be found, who will set up the Koran as the rule of life; and so the history of the Arab Caliphate, for the next hundred years, will be much as a chapter in the history of any other profane Monarchy, with religion very much in the background. Monotheism on the theological side will have its counterpart in absolute Monarchy in Politics. Only with the coming of the Abbasides, do we find a really theocratic state; and by then, alas, the racial simplicity and accordingly superiority of the Arab is a thing of the past.

Who was to be Omar's successor? The method of election which Omar on his death-bed directed, was the nomination of six electors who should choose the new Caliph. His own predilection was for Abdur Rahman, one of the Prophet's associates of whom we know but little. Abdur Rahman was, however, persistent in declining the offer; putting it, in the descriptive Arab phrase, "off his neck"—and so, Omar selected Talha, Al-Zubeir, Saad, Ali and Othman as the electors besides Abdur Rahman. Of these Talha was away. The remaining

electors could not agree but when told that they would not be allowed to delay any longer, they determined to leave the choice to Abdur Rahman. The only two candidates with any chance of success were Ali, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet and father of the Prophet's only grandsons, who might be considered as the candidate of the religious party, and Othman, who had married successively two of Muhammad's daughters (both of them were at this time dead), who was the favourite of the Koreish. Abdur Rahman interrogated each as to whether they would bind themselves to act by the Prophet's teachings and the precedents of his predecessor. Both agreed that they would follow the Prophet's teachings, but Ali made a reserve as to his predecessor's teachings and Othman made none. And so Othman was elected. A more unfortunate choice could not have been made. Although an early convert to Islam and a refugee, all his interests were bound up with the old Mecca burghers. An old man about 70, when he became Caliph, he seems to have been incapable of any strong resolution and this at a time when, beyond all things, resolution was most needed. So far from keeping the balance even between town and desert, between Meccan and the inhabitants of other towns, between Koreish and non-Koreish, from the very outset of his reign he showed unmistakably that he could not, like his predecessor, lead the Arab in the right way, treating him as a camel with delicate nostrils, but that he would support, as far as he could, the aristocratic party at Mecca in securing and retaining all the temporary good things, which Islam had bestowed on the Arabs. From the outset he was suspected by

the majority of his countrymen, and in Arabia at least he had none of the most illustrious of the companions and assistants of the Prophet to help him.

At the very outset trouble attended the new Caliph. Omar's son on being told that his father's assassin had been seen talking to a Christian slave belonging to Hurmuz, the Persian prince (of whom we have been told how he saved his life by pouring out the water), promptly slew them both. Hurmuz was a Muhammadan and there was no proof of his complicity in the murder. The Koran lays down expressly that a wilful murder, such as this, should be punished by death; but Othman could hardly begin his reign by putting to death his predecessor's son, and so he declared a *weregild*, death price and paid it himself. Thus he began his reign by a breach of the Islamic law and though probably in this case, it was inevitable and right, still there it was, a change from the law observed invariably by his two predecessors, and furthermore, a breach of the promise made on his election to Abdur Rahman. A further indication of the spirit in which he intended to reign was an increase of the stipends of the leading men. These had already, if anything, more than their share and this increase was an indication that Othman intended to govern as the head of the Koreish rather than as the commander of the Faithful. And not only this, for the branch of the Koreish to which he belonged, the Omayya, was the family beyond all, promoted and advanced by him. As a nepotist ever preferring to highly place his family and connections, he was in striking contrast to his two predecessors. Young men, inexperienced men, men who had opposed the

Prophet to the last, were placed in positions of high trust without utter disregard of the older and trusted companions of the Prophet.

Abroad, the wave of victory spread further and further. Reverses indeed there were. On one occasion, in the mountain passes of Adherbaijan, a whole Arab army was destroyed by the Turks; but on the whole, the wave continued to course on and on till the whole of Persia, much of what is now Russian Turkestan and a part of the present Afghanistan, was reached. In the west, the Greeks made a great attempt to retake Alexandria but after much fighting, were defeated. The chief command in Egypt was taken by Othman from Amru. The Caliph proposed that he should remain in charge of the army, while the Caliph's own favourite, Ibn Abi Sarh, should be in charge of the civil and revenue administration. "This," Amru replied, "would be like holding a cow's horn while another milked her." This Ibn Abi Sarh had just escaped from being put to death when Muhammad entered Mecca, as conqueror. Omar had given him charge of Upper Egypt, but it was Othman who made him ruler of the whole country. His rule was certainly vigorous. He conquered the Syrian coast, old Cyrene, modern Tripoli and Barca and defeated Gregory, the Greek Governor of Carthage, in a great battle. Furthermore, he became the first Muhammadan sea-captain. As such, he defeated the Greeks 652 A.D. in a fight close to Alexandria. This battle was determined not by sea tactics, such as were those of the Athenians in their great sea-fights in days of yore, but by boarding and a hand-to-hand struggle with swords and daggers.

Three years before this the Island of Cyprus, the first of Mussulman oversea conquests, fell into Arab hands. Abu Keis was the name of the Arab Chief under whom this conquest was made. Persia, too, was finally conquered in this reign. Unlike the inhabitants of Irak, the Aryans of Persia proper did not readily reconcile themselves to the Arab yoke. With the strong hand of Omar withdrawn, revolts broke out north, east and centre and it took much fighting to reduce the country to peace again. Much which is not accounted part of Persia at present, but was a part of the old Persian Empire was now included. Merv, Sarakhs, Herat, Kabul, Ghazni, all the lands of which these towns are the centres, all of which are politically not within Persia at present, became Mussulman: and this finally. Non-Semitic rulers will arise from time to time in the lands of which these are the centre; but whether Turk, Aryan, or Semitic, such rulers will invariably be Muhammadan. Infidels as the Mussulmans call them; Pagans, as Europeans ordinarily say, will be found in plenty, especially among the tribes in the more inaccessible hills, but the rulers, the court, the civilisation of these lands will, from the days of Othman till now be (with the exception of the short interval of the Mongol invasion of Western Asia), always Mussulman.

Yezdegird, the unfortunate last ruler of Persia, met his death in the eighth year of Othman's reign. After the crushing defeat of Nehavend, as I have already stated, he had crossed the Oxus and asked the help of the Turkish Khakhan. This was for a time given, then after the Khakhan had suffered defeat at Arab hands, withdrawn. A wanderer, with fewer

and fewer faithful, he was assassinated in a miller's hut near Merv, almost entirely destitute. *Sic transit gloria mundi*, the last of the race, which had disputed and on the whole successfully, the rule of Asia for 400 years with the Roman Empire, came to an ignoble end alone and friendless. The Empire of Persia with its great traditions of over a thousand years was at an end, not to arise again for more than 800 years. The rôle of the Persians was no longer that of the Ruler. Arab or Turk reigned in his country for many a year to come. But all the same he (much as the Greek did in the palmy days of Rome) introduced himself into the service of the conqueror and so successfully, that Persian ideas, Persian administrators, Persian religious conceptions will be found every where throughout Islam. It is hardly too much to say that the victory of the Abbasides was really the victory of Persia.

The antagonism between the Koreish and the rest of the Arabs came to a head in the two great Arab military colonies Kufa and Basora. The colonists were almost entirely non-Koreish Arabs but their Governors were of the tribe of Koreish, and not only so, but two of them were men distinguished for the laxity of their morals, of coming from a section of the Koreish which had resisted as long as it could the prophetic mission of Muhammad. One, Governor of Kufa, was the son of a captive at the battle of Bedr, the Prophet's first victory, who was told by the Prophet himself, when about to be put to death, in answer to a query as to who would care for his children, "that Hell fire would be their guardian." Another, Abu Musa, was in the habit of lecturing to the

people of Basora, of the necessity of endurance and hardness. As he left his castle, on one occasion, with a numerous string of mules carrying his luggage, the Basora folk called out to him to give them his mules on which to ride and for him to go on foot. At Kufa, Said, the Koreish Governor, told the people that Irak was the garden of the Koreish. "What," they said, "the land which we have conquered do you claim for your community? Without our strong arms and lances, what would the Koreish have done?" A foolish remark by a youth in an assembly at Kufa, one of the ordinary everyday meetings at which the Governor and free men met at the market place or elsewhere on equal terms, "that it would be a good thing if the Governor possessed certain lands close by Kufa," caused a tumult at which both the youth and his father were well-nigh killed. "What," said the folk of Kufa, "shall the Governor take away *our* good lands?"

Said at last thought the best way to stifle the rising discontent was to send the leaders to Mu'awiya, the Koreishite Governor of Syria, hereafter the first of the Ommayads. This latter thought he had succeeded in breaking their spirits, but though submissive while under his power, on their return to Kufa, they again stirred up sedition. The leader, Al Ashtar, first betook himself to Medina and then, when Said went there to visit the Caliph, to Kufa itself. The despot, so Ashtar declared, had gone to Medina to accomplish their ruin. The stipends even of the women were to be cut down, the broad fields the men of Kufa had conquered were to be known as the Garden of the Koreish. Rebellion broke out; Said attempting to

return was met and driven back. The Caliph was terrified by the strength of the outburst and appointed Abu Musa as Said's successor. And so the folk of Kufa had their way and the weakness of the Caliph became manifest to all.

Ali was moved by the chief men of Medina to expostulate with Othman, to point out to him that his nepotism and weakness were threatening the prosperity of the Mussulman world. The conversation was of a heated nature. Othman constantly urged that he was only following the example of Omar, to which the reply was that Omar kept all under him in order, Othman did not. After this interview Othman repeated the same thing in the pulpit of the Mosque. He was only following Omar's example. No answer there was possible but the speech did nothing to soften matters. Indeed, a threat by Othman's cousin Merwan that finally the sword would have to decide, although disowned by the Caliph, made the position only the more acute.

Abdur Rahman died about this time (653 A.D.). He, too, was dissatisfied with the Caliph and his breaches of Muhammadan law. No one remained to aid the aged Caliph save Mu'awiya and he was far away. Othman called in the Governors of the various provinces when they met him, as was the custom at the next Pilgrimage, to confer with him as to what were the causes of the widespread discontent and as to how they could remove it. They came, but no useful advice was given and no plan adopted. Mu'awiya alone suggested a feasible plan that the Caliph should leave Medina and join him in Syria. Whether this advice would only have precipitated the crisis about to visit the Mussulman world, cannot be stated

with certainty, probably it would have done so and also probably have weakened Mu'awiya's eventual chances of ruling; but anyhow, the advice was not taken and Othman was left in Medina to face the coming storm. This came from two directions, Irak and Egypt. The malcontents in the last named country, were headed by Muhammad, son of Abu Bakr, who had driven Ibn Abi Sarh, the Governor appointed by Othman, out of the land. Bands from Kufa, Basora and Fostat met outside Medina. Othman, from the pulpit, declared he knew that their object was not to visit the tomb of the Prophet, as they declared, but to attack him. The citizens manned the walls, the insurgents found they could not enter and so they proposed to be satisfied with the Caliph's promises of reform, and retired. But not for long, or far. The Egyptian band had discovered a servant of Othman's on the way to Fostat. In his possession was a letter, sealed with the Caliph's seal, in which orders were given to the Egyptian Governors to imprison and execute the malcontents. Whether the seal was genuine and whether the letter was written at Othman's order is doubtful. Anyhow, the Egyptians sent word to the men of Kufa and Basora and three bands returned and obtained a footing in the city. Othman denied his seal. "Whether it be thine, or not, resign thou old dotard," said the rebels. Othman flatly refused. The position he held, *that* he would maintain till death. Like the Pope, the Caliph cannot resign. When he next entered the Mosque pulpit, the rebels stoned him and those of Medina, who came to assist him, were driven away. At last he was forced to keep to his house which was besieged. The siege at first was only nominal,

but when word came that assistance was near from Syria, a strict blockade began to be kept and the water supply was cut off. At last the palace was stormed and the aged Caliph cut down. Amongst his assailants the son of Abu Bakr was conspicuous. Naila, the Caliph's favourite wife, had her finger cut off, which was carried away by some of the Faithful and hung up in the great Mosque at Damascus.

Where were all the companions of the Prophet and what were they doing all this time? Talha, Al-Zubeir and Ali were certainly in Medina and probably many others. None of them, as far as history knows, favoured the rebels, not even Ali, but not one of them used his full influence to drive them away. Against Ali, particularly, it was charged that he made no real attempts to save the old man. It is difficult to believe that if these companions of the Prophet had really exerted themselves to their utmost, the rebels would not have been driven away. Probably the feeling was one of weariness with the old man and a feeling that they were not called on for active action. Anyhow, the result was epoch-making. Disruption was bound to come some day in the Mussulman world. Rival interests, national antipathies, Persian and other extraneous influences, all made this some day a certainty, but that it came as it did, was the result of the older statesmen at Medina not having prevented Othman's murder. In any case he could not have lived long. And their failure to do this proved their incapacity to foresee events.

The final recension of the Koran took place in this reign. The edition of Ibn Masud was set aside in favour of one made by a syndicate of experts at

Medina and the recension, thus pronounced to be correct, was made authoritative. Copies of the same were deposited in Medina, Mecca, Kufa and Damascus. It is this first copy which, by the recent treaty of Peace, has to be handed over to the king of Arabia. Other copies were destroyed. Ibn Masud was very angry at the slight passed on his work and the people of Kufa equally so. Othman's enemies made it a charge against him that he had copies of the Koran burnt: an unpardonable sacrilege. But the result is that the text is uniform, and it is only, very occasionally, that a variation taken from some Koran, which has escaped the fire, is found. There are probably more variations in the readings of a chapter of Genesis than there are in the whole of the Koran.

CHAPTER V.

ALI.

THE shirt of the murdered Caliph and the severed finger of Naila were carried away by a retainer of the deceased to Mu'awiya who had them nailed up in the great mosque at Damascus. They were the visible evidence of the deed which had been done and the instigators of the cry for vengeance. The Syrians (as the Mussulman soldiery in Syria are ordinarily named in histories) in their demand for revenge not only wished the punishment of the actual murderers, but the degradation of the town of Medina itself and the substitution of Damascus in its place, as the chief capital of the Muslim world. In other words they desired what shortly came about, that Arabia should no longer be the centre of this world. Whatever the Prophet and the first two Caliphs may have desired, these Syrians saw that for a world empire neither Medina nor Mecca were fitted to be capitals. The political centre of Islam was not to be in the midst of sandy deserts but open and accessible to all. We shall see that, however unwillingly, the Mussulmans of Arabia itself and their arch-representative Ali came to the same conclusion.

Medina, on the death of the Caliph, was in a state of anarchy. The citizens kept indoors. The insurgents took possession of the town and only allowed the dead Othman to be buried with hurried service

and maimed rites, in an open field. One of the rebels presided at the daily prayers. At least they felt that something should be done before they left; for they were men with homes at Basora, Kufa or Egypt, and that Islam should be restored to its normal state by the election of a Caliph. The doctrine that a Caliph was necessary for Islam, and that without one there could be no properly organised Mussulman state, whether formulated by the Prophet or not, by this time had become a fundamental proposition of Mussulman polity. Who was it to be? Obviously Ali. The rebels could not possibly expect one of themselves to be recognised as the Caliph by the Mussulman community. Their Caliph had to be chosen from one who had been a companion of the Prophet.

It is not probable, whatever subsequent Shiah tradition may suggest, that at that time there was already a feeling that wrong had been done by the election of the first three Caliphs as such, in preference to Ali; but with Othman's death, only one remained who could claim at once by relationship to the Prophet, and by long and faithful service and adhesion to him, this high post. There were two, indeed, living of those who had been nominated by Omar as electors, Talha and Al-Zubeir, but their claims were not to be compared with Ali's. And who would willingly, at that time, have assumed the position, surrounded, as he would be, on all sides with difficulty and danger? On the one hand the rebels were at the time the masters at Medina, and a Caliph chosen there, would have to be circumspect, for a time at least, in dealing with them. And at the same time the outer world of Islam had

to be considered. How would it look on all these strange doings at Medina ? There is little doubt that whatever feelings they may have had as to the brutal murder which ended Othman's career, the Medina elders were *at one in condemnation* of his administration. Ali, we may be sure, did not accept the position with a light heart and the sense of duty must have been (possibly with a small grain of ambition, a very small grain) the main reason that he took upon himself the Caliphate. The course of events made it necessary for him to accept the support of the rebels, surrounding events made this imperative as we shall later see, but this does not prove that if he could, he would not have done without them.

Al-Zubeir and Talha were amongst the first to acknowledge him. The people of Medina followed; but as to the general Muhammadan world, this was a different affair. Around Medina lived crowds of Bedouins, who had welcomed the late disturbances as affording opportunities for plunder. The Koreish were suspicious. These rebels of Basora, Kufa and Egypt what did they represent ? The Arab tribes as opposed to the Koreish aristocracy. And then came the question of the Governorships. Constitutionally, as far as we can describe as a Constitution, one still in the making, Ali had the right to appoint new Governors or confirm the old as he thought best. But though this was the case, mere political wisdom would have taught him any change, at the present, was inexpedient. His cousin Ibn Al-Abbas pressed this forcibly on him. But to such advice he paid no heed. "Make no change at least in the Syrian Governorship," urged this adviser, "lest

Mu'awiya challenge this election and deny thy right." But no, Mu'awiya must be set aside. Ibn Al-Abbas was offered the Governorship in his place. This he was too wise to accept. The Governor, who was finally appointed, met with such a rough reception that he was glad to escape with his life to Mecca. To Ali's letter to Mu'awiya, demanding his allegiance, the latter was long in replying. At last the answer was sent by Kabisa, a Bedouin chief. The cover was inscribed "From Mu'awiya to Ali." Inside there was a blank. Ali was astonished and asked Kabisa the reason of this strange despatch. To this the Bedouin, on being assured of his life, informed Ali that the Syrian army was on the march with the intent of avenging Othman's death and avenging it on him, Ali. "On me," said the new Ruler, "I call the Lord to witness I am guiltless of Othman's death. Begone." And so he was, but as I have already said, he had not the power, even if he had had the inclination to avenge it on the murderers, who were his chief supporters. The Bedouin's statement was a bit previous. No Syrian army at that time or for long after, marched against Medina. Mu'awiya, as wise and politic a statesman as Islam has ever seen, awaited his time. As regards the other Governorships, Kufa would have none of Ali's nomination. The Governor of Basora gave over charge to the new Governor and the choice of Kais for Egypt was fortunate; but both in Irak and Egypt there was a strong party opposed to Ali either on account of the murder of Othman or of his ante-Koreish tendencies. They awaited their time. The first to commence the civil war were Talha and Al-Zubeir, whom we have already mentioned. Leaving Medina on the pretence

of a pilgrimage to Mecca, they met Ayesha, the Prophet's favourite wife, on the way. She did not care for Ali. He is supposed to have taken an adverse part to her, in an episode in the Prophet's life, in which she was said to have acted indiscreetly on a journey and which needed a special revelation for her exculpation. On hearing of Othman's death, she exclaimed that she too would avenge it. Arriving at Mecca, the three set about raising an army. This it took some four months to do. During this time quarrels broke out, with difficulty appeased, between Talha and Al-Zubeir and their supporters, as to who was to be the Caliph. This was in itself not propitious. At last they set out for Basora. Voices were not wanting, pointing Talha and Al-Zubeir out as the murderers of Othman. The charge was probably as true in regard to them, as it was regarding Ali. On the way to Basora, the omens were not propitious. From one halting place Ayesha refused to move, owing to her memory of some prophecies of her husband, until the news spread that Ali and his force were upon them; whereupon, yielding to the greater fear, she agreed to go on. Arriving at Basora they found the town people divided into two parties, the one favouring the new comers, the other loyal to Ali. At last the first party got the upperhand. The town passed into the hands of Talha and Al-Zubeir, and those of Basora, who had taken part in the murder of Othman, were hunted down and put to death. Basora remained in their hands for months. After much delay Ali raised a force, which, after proceeding to Kufa and getting the allegiance of the people there, advanced on Basora.

Ali's leaving Medina was a momentous event in the history of Islam. It meant the passing for good of the Muhammadan Empire from Arabia. For two centuries more Arabs will still be the strongest force in Muhammadanism, the Caliphate will be in essentials an Arab State, but the governing Arabs will not be the stay-at-home citizens of Medina and Mecca, but the children of the dispersion: following the description often given to non-Palestinian Jews. The Arab rulers will have their birth and bringing up in Irak or Syria, not in Arabia itself. Mecca and Medina will fall away, especially the latter, from their high estate. The former, owing to the yearly pilgrimage, will still maintain some of the importance it bore in the days of the Prophet and his immediate successors, but the latter town will rapidly dwindle. Arabia will be, as the Prophet desired and Omar brought about, thoroughly Muhammadan, but from it will spring no forces vivifying and promulgating Muhammadanism. As it was at the death of Othman, so will it be to this day. With exceptional outbursts of fanaticism, the Arab of Arabia of to-day is hardly changed from what he was more than twelve hundred years ago. The Arab of the desert will still wander, eternally wander in small communities, regardless of the Prophet or his law. The townsmen will be bound in the meshes and phylacteries of the law, but the spirit will be entirely wanting. Little, however, did Ali dream of this when he left Medina, as it proved for the last time. No one was more typical of the best class of Arab than he; no one represented better the genius of the Arab race.

When he reached Basora, his first attempt was a compromise. He was unwilling to shed Muhammadan blood. Up to the time the only bloodshed by Muhammadans had been that of unbelievers. From now on Muhammadan hands will be almost as frequently stained with Muhammadan, as with non-Muhammadan blood. But Ali's attempts failed, partly because the numerous regicides in his army foresaw that any settlement would mean destruction to themselves, but mainly because the leaders of the discontents were not inclined to yield to Ali's authority. The fight which took place between the two parties, is known as the Battle of the Camel, for the reason that Ayesha herself, mounted on a camel, urged on the Basora troops. Round this camel the battle fiercely raged, the Basora men doing their best to save from danger the mother of the Faithful. But their efforts were spent and their bloodshed in vain. The animal came to the ground. Ayesha had to surrender to Ali who treated her with the greatest respect; proceeding to Arabia, she disappears from Mussulman history. Talha and Al-Zubeir were both killed. Henceforth Ali was undisputed ruler in Irak. The unfortunate circumstance about the fight was that it had undoubtedly been won by the regicides. Henceforth, willy-nilly, Ali was their King and unable to do without their help. He chose as his capital Kufa, which had never revolted from him and not Basora. It was nearer Syria to which his attention was now turned. Otherwise, between it and Basora, there was but little to choose. Both were great military colonies and in both the turbulent Arab spirit unmistakably showed itself.

Ali had perforce largely to depend upon his relations, the sons of Abbas, and voices were not wanting that Ali was perpetuating the nepotism which had been the bane of Othman's reign and nothing was changed save one king stork for another. But his real trouble came from Syria. Mu'awiya was also a relation of the prophet through Al Sofian, his uncle and bitter opponent. The Koreishite element, the old Meccan, was particularly strong in Syria and the murder of Othman, in its eyes, the greatest of sacrileges. A great number of the southern Arabs, Yemenites, had also joined the Syrian army and these had no sympathy with the unbridled Bedouin democracy of Basora and Kufa. Add to this that Mu'awiya was as politic and cautious, as Ali was open and the odds were strongly in favour of the former. Such, however, did not seem to be the position at the time. As in the case of Basora, he started with negotiations. These, as might be expected, failed. Mu'awiya's answers insisted on the punishment of the regicides. How this could be effected, when they were the most reliable part of Ali's force, he did not deign to say. And so it came to warfare and battle. Ali's chief lieutenant, Al Ashtar, of whom we have written before as having been sent in Othman's reign to Mu'awiya as one of the leading Iraki discontents, was one of the regicides and looked on with special abhorrence by the followers of Mu'awiya. Offers on Ali's part, to settle the matter by single combat were declined, on the ground that he, being a murderer, was not entitled to expect any free Arab to measure arms with him. When the armies came face to face not far from Aleppo, Mu'awiya's first move was to try and cut off Ali's force from its water supply.

The battle of Siffin followed, though before it again there were days wasted in useless negotiations, Mu'awiya demanding the punishment of Othman's murderers and Ali's representatives charging the really fox-like former with desiring the Caliphate. The fight was obstinate and well contested. The first day was a decided success for Ali. Al Ashtar was everywhere fighting amongst the foremost. Mu'awiya was thinking of flight but dissuaded therefrom by Amru, the conqueror of Egypt. It was suggested that a single hand contest should decide the matter, but Mu'awiya was frightened to meet Ali, the Lion. Again the fight began on the second day, and again Ali's forces were getting the better. Then Amru thought of a stratagem to save the Syrian army, let the soldiers tie their Korans on to the point of their lances and shout "Let the Law of the Lord decide." The soldiers of Ali heard. Useless was Ali's speech, that such a cry was simply a device to avoid defeat. Useless, was Al Ashtar's refusal to stop the fight. The Iraki soldiery pressed round Ali and threatened to slay him if he did not order the battle to cease. On Mu'awiya being asked the meaning of this strange sight, he said he asked for arbitration and an umpire. To this, Ali most unwillingly agreed and with this agreement his rule really passed.

The remaining story of his reign is one of constant decline. Abu Musa, a weak man without much firmness, or political experience, was forced on Ali as arbitrator by his own men. On the side of Mu'awiya was the crafty Amru, the conqueror of Egypt. Abu Musa's view was that both Ali and Mu'awiya should be deposed and the community

should choose a successor. To this, Amru seemed to agree, and they went forth to declare their decision to the assembled people. The place of meeting was Duma in the desert, half way between Damascus and Medina. Abu Musa spoke first. He stated the decision at which they had arrived. When it came to Amru's turn to speak, instead of stating the decision as agreed upon, he told the crowd that his decision was to depose Ali, but confirm Mu'awiya. And so the arbitrators, as can easily be conceived, settled nothing. But in the meantime Ali's internal troubles had already begun. Although the Iraki soldiery had pressed on him the acceptance of arbitration, a considerable number of them disagreed. They considered it a pernicious sin against the most High, that Ali, the Lord's anointed, should have consented to submit to the judgment of man. To this party belonged many, who had no special religious fanaticism but were determined that they would not be ruled by the Koreish. Theirs was the first of the many democratic sects, which, from time to time, have arisen in Islam. Known as the Kharijites, the chosen people who had come out, they held not only that a Caliph had to be elected by the Mussulman community, but that he might be deposed by the community also, in case of grievous sin; Ali's sin was flagrant; it cried to heaven. Ali, humane as ever, tried in vain to reconcile them; at first he seems to have partially succeeded, but after the failure of the arbitration, he found that he had to use force. On the morrow of the farce played at Duma, Ali found himself in a worse position than ever before. The Syrians were unconquered and his own power was undermined everywhere.

His obvious course was to attack the Syrians at once and strike hard, but the difficulty was to get any force together. The old enthusiasm was gone and the army he collected had to be raised by conscription. And when he had got it together, he found that the first foe against which he had to use it, was not the Syrians but the Kharijites. Europe and Asia alike give numerous instances of religious fanatics, who under the pretext of religion or in some cases, under the genuine belief that such acts are in conformity with their religion, perpetrate the most horrible outrages, massacring, ravaging, burning. And so did the Kharijites, who had made themselves a standing camp not far from the Tigris. Attempts to reconcile them failed. The Law of the Lord with them, meant the law of the sword; and so Ali had, whether he desired it or not, to attack and disperse them. This he did by storming their camp at Nahrawan. The rout was complete, Ali's loss was trifling, but enough escaped to perpetuate the sect. In aftertimes we find this sect often seemingly crushed but ever again and again reviving. As to Ali's expedition, this fight was fatal. The troops demanded leave to go to their homes before entering on a new campaign. Once dispersed, Ali was never able to bring them again together afterwards. And so, during the rest of his reign, no attempt was ever made to assail Mu'awiya in Syria. On the other hand, the latter's rule there every day became more secure, while in the remainder of the Empire Ali's power gradually diminished, this diminution accelerating itself from time to time, till his end.

First of all, Egypt fell away. Kais, Ali's first appointment to the government, had been exceedingly

wise. But Ali would not listen to his advice, to use no force towards the strong party which called for vengeance on the murderers of Othman, but to win them over to his rules by concessions and kindness. Ali recalled Kais who, disgusted at the treatment he received, first went into retirement at Medina and only after some time became reconciled to Ali. The Caliph took him back into his confidence but he declined to return to Egypt. Al-Ashtar was appointed in his place but was poisoned by a Bedouin chief before he arrived in the country. From what we read of him this Al-Ashtar seems to have been a man of great character and by far the best soldier of the time. Undoubtedly he was one of the leaders of the revolt which brought about Othman's death, but we have nothing else to his discredit. He was succeeded by Abu Bakr's son Muhammad. Opposed to him was Amru, the former Governor of Egypt, one of the most politic of men. Muhammad was defeated, slain, his body put inside an ass's skin and burnt. He seems to have been a man of much courage, but little wisdom. It is, indeed, a notable fact that none of the sons of the first three Caliphs inherited their father's character. The sons of the fourth, Ali, are known throughout the Muhammadan world but not on the ground of character alone. It was the martyrdom at Kerbala, which has made Hassan's name world-wide.

In Persia, too, there were troubles which did not come to an end until Ali appointed Ziyad of Basora as his Governor. This man was of marked ability. By cajoleries and threats, by setting one discontent against another, he managed to bring the country in

order; in aftertimes, his rule was compared to that of Nushiriun as the "reign of justice".

But it was Arabia which caused the Caliph the greatest grief. Mu'awiya sent an expedition to the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, to compel the citizens of these towns to acknowledge him as Caliph. There was no force to resist and the citizens through fear of their lives were forced to declare him as such. The language of Basr, leader of the Syrians, was not such as to forward conciliation. To the people of Medina he spoke thus: "O citizens of Medina, where is the grey-haired aged man to whom but as yesterday and on this very spot, I swore allegiance? Verily but for my promise to Mu'awiya, who bade me stay the sword, I had not left here a single soul alive." This General previously misused various of the Companions of the Prophet, so that in the literature of the time, the language used about Pharoah, in the Koran is applied to him. From the holy cities Basr proceeded to Yemen, ravaging and committing every sort of atrocity. Two children, the grand-children of Al-Abbas, being captured by him, were slain. When an army came from Kufa to restore Ali's authority, Basr anticipated it, and escaped to Syria. This Kufan army hardly behaved better than the army of Mu'awiya. Everywhere throughout Arabia two factions arose, Ali-ites and Oth-man-ites. Everywhere there was murder and rapine. The good days of the first two Caliphs had gone, never to return. All this wore out Ali, and he made peace with Mu'awiya. It is said that this peace by which the two agreed to lay down arms, respect each other's territories and act as friends, was really merely a truce. Mu'awiya was proclaimed Caliph in

Jerusalem and Ali was, we are told, putting together a fresh army. But the truce was never broken, for in the next year Ali was assassinated. The story of his murder is this. Three Kharijites, mourning over the decay of Islam from its high estate, met together and decided that only the removal of the main causes of this decay could restore the Caliphate and the Mussulman State to its former purity. These three main causes were Ali, Mu'awiya and Amru, the crafty arbitrator of Duma, the worldly statesman without any religious scruples. The three were to be murdered on the same day, one Friday of the Ramzan Fast. On this day they were bound to lead the prayers at Kufa, Damascus and Fostat. To ensure that death would ensue, each of the three conspirators dipped his sword in a deadly poison. Amru was sick on that day, and so the captain of the guard, who presided over the prayers at the Fostat mosque, was slain by the conspirator destined to slay Amru, he mistaking him for Amru. Mu'awiya at Damascus was attacked, severely wounded but escaped with his life. In Ali's case, the attack was fatal. The murderer, Ibn Muljim, aided by other Kharijites, attacked him on his first entry to the mosque. On being seized, Ibn Muljim stated that he had contemplated the deed for 40 days during which he had prayed that the wickedest of mankind might meet his fate. This, Ali said, was Ibn Muljim himself. His direction as to the murderer's punishment was to be according to the law laid down in the Koran. No torture or maiming was to be used, and so on Ali's death his murderer was executed. When asked, if he died, should his son Hassan succeed, he replied "I neither command nor forbid" It is

clear that the claim of divine right to the Caliphate in the family of Ali were not put forward by Ali himself. The Shiahs only took their rise after his death. The murder of his son Hassan at Kerbala, the persecution of his descendants, Persian ideas in theology, Persian opposition to Arab rule, these are the real genesis of Shiahism.

Ali himself was a typical Arab. Through the halo which has surrounded him, it is not very difficult to truly see the man, the brave warrior, the generous opponent, the lenient ruler. No acts of cruelty are alleged against him, no mean trickery. On the other hand, he was too easy going, too unsuspicious ever to have made a great statesman. His fame is largely due to the fact that he, although not a Shiah himself, is the head from which Shiahism is traced, and it is one of history's many ironies that he, an Arab of the Arabs, should be the founder of a sect whose strongest supporters are the Persians, a race which detests the Arab, the Arab ideas and the Arab rule with the greatest detestation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OMMAYADS.

WITH Ali's death, Damascus became the centre of Muhammadan Rule. The pretence of a theocracy had become very thin, the new race of Caliphs ruled much as other Princes, who, having had no claim to a special mission from above, had ruled in the past. The Ommayad dynasty was, indeed, descended from relations of Muhammad, but from relations who had denied their relation's claim to be a Prophet and had only acknowledged him, under the pressure of dire necessity. Once, however, Mussulmans, they tried to seize all the good things arising out of Muhammadanism in this world, for themselves. They were to be the rulers; the spoils of conquest were mainly to belong to them; any demands for theocratic rule were to be sternly put down. We shall learn what was the fate of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, during their times; how little respect some of them had for even the Kaaba. The Court at Damascus (and I may say also subsequently the Court at Bagdad) were the seats of unbounded luxury, of numerously stocked Harems and of splendour unparalleled since the spacious days of the early Roman Empire. The Law of the Koran weighed very lightly on the rulers or on the mass of their subjects. Wine was freely imbibed at the Palace; its prohibition was only nominal, excepting more than once when indulgence in it was made an

excuse for deposing a ruler, who on other grounds was sought to be deposed.

The accounts Arabian Historians give us of the Ommayads and their doings must indeed be received with caution. These men wrote after the overthrow of the Dynasty when the interest of their successors was to blacken their characters as far as possible. But the evidence is too consistent, and side lights, as the Arab Poetry of the time, too greatly confirm it for us to set aside the pictures we get of the Damascus Court as perverse or untrue, though at times they may be exaggerated. This is certain that Damascus unlike Medina was essentially a secular Court, where secular motives were all important and religious teachings fell into the background. We do get, indeed, as in the case of Omar II, occasional returns to theocratic Government, but these are few in number. And when they did occur the result was harmful alike to the finances and to good Government generally of but little use as religious reformations.

On Ali's death his son Hassan was set up as Caliph. But he had neither the means nor the will to seriously strive with Mu'awiya. Starting from Kufa he proceeded with a large force as far as Al Madain, sending Kais, his father's trusted friend ahead, with a small body of troops. Stories which turned out to be false, came to Al Madain that Kais was slain. On this, Hassan's own troops pressed him to yield to Mu'awiya and this, without much ado he did. A pension and a residence at Medina was what he demanded and obtained. A further promise Mu'awiya gave that no prayers reviling his father should be made in Hassan's presence. The further demand that they should not be made at

all was refused. On Hassan's submission (Kais submitted also), Mu'awiya was universally accepted as Caliph and as such made a solemn entry into Kufa. At last he reigned indisputably and alone. Soon after his accession his staunch friend and supporter Amru, who had accompanied him to Kufa, died in Egypt. Mu'awiya had reinstated him in the Governorship of that country and this office he retained till his death. His importance in the early History of Islam is only subordinate to that of Abu Bakr, Omar and Khalid. Since its conquest Egypt (which was in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D. fanatically Christian), became overpoweringly Muhammadan, though a Coptic Church, the reminder of the old Egyptian Church, has survived to this day, and with the English Rule, the Coptic Community has rapidly obtained a position of importance during the last years which it had not during the previous twelve centuries.

Mu'awiya's chief lieutenant, after the death of Amru, was his half-brother Ziyad. Their father was Abu Sofian, but while Mu'awiya's mother Hind was one of the Koreish, Ziyad's was a slave woman. In spite of the obstacles that his birth threw in his way, his zeal and industry rapidly gained him high office. A strong supporter of Ali he was appointed by the latter as Governor of Basora and Istakhar. Reputed the ablest statesman of the day, he showed the unruly residents of Basora that they had to do with a man of iron will, who would not be bullied by mobs or turbulence. Even after Hassan's abdication, for a long time, he would have nothing to do with Mu'awiya whom he had once saved from condemnation for adultery by evidence of a very

equivocal nature. At last Moghira, the ex-Governor of Basora, induced him to yield. But he only did so on condition of retaining his power. On proceeding to Damascus, he was reinstated as Governor of Basora and Istakhar. As Governor of this latter place he became ruler of Persia. Soon after, on Moghira's death he added Kufa to his other viceroyalties. He was the first ruler, who really kept the turbulent inhabitants of Basora in order. On one occasion he was stoned in the Basora mosque. Putting armed soldiers at the door he asked the worshippers as they were going out to deny on oath that they had thrown stones. The slightest hesitation and off went their heads. Under his vigorous rule the Muhammadan Empire extended itself across the Oxus and to Sind. Turk and Indian alike felt his power, and the conquests both of Balkh and Trans-Oxiana as well as of Sind became permanent. Both lands became from henceforth under the power of Muhammadan Rulers and the inhabitants, Muhammadan in religion. Ziyad died before Mu'awiya. The latter had made him before his death Governor of the Hijaz in addition to the Governorships he had already held. His son Obeidullah is famous or infamous in Muhammadan history as the chief author of the tragedy enacted at Kerbala.

Hassan died during Mu'awiya's reign at Mecca, poisoned it is said. Some authorities suggest this was Mu'awiya's work, but this is improbable; Mu'awiya had nothing to fear from him. It is much more probable that he was poisoned by some inmate of his harem. Known as the divorcer, he kept to the rule of the Koran, as to only having

four wives, at a time, by frequent divorces. The younger brother, Hossein, was of a much stronger nature and the death of Hassan meant Hossein being the representative of Ali's descendants.

In Mu'awiya's time the Mussalmans for the first time attacked Constantinople. The fear of the sea, which Omar had, and which he inculcated in his Generals, had vanished. A large force was transhipped by sea to a spot near Constantinople and the ships aided in the siege. But it ended in a bloody repulse. We read of Greek fire for the first time. This was showered on the ships and after much loss the expedition had to retire. Constantinople was then perhaps the strongest fortified City in the World. Century after century many races surged up against its walls, Arabs, Bulgars and Scythians but all in vain. It was more than five centuries afterwards and then, largely, by internal dissension, that the leader of the Fifth Crusade stormed it; two and a half centuries later came its final capture by the Osmanli Turk.

In the West, Islam made great progress during Mu'awiya's Caliphate. The Berbers, who are now the most Mullah-ridden if not the most devoted of Mussulmans, were at that time ever submitting, ever again rebelling. To bridle them Okba, the Muhammadan General, founded the City of Kairwan, well-known in African History and now the centre of the Senussi power. By the time of Mu'awiya's death almost all Muhammad's companions, indeed, all of his well-known companions, had passed away. The tomb of one of the last, Abu Ayyub (in whose house the Prophet had dwelt the first six months after his arrival at Medina), is near Constantinople

at the siege of which place he fell. For centuries it has been a centre of Muhammadan pilgrimage. During Mu'awiya's reign Ayesha, the youngest and most beloved wife of the Prophet, died. The heroic age has passed away; the epigeni could not with truth boast that they were better than their fathers. Abu Bakr, Omar, Khalid, Amru and Muthanna had successors but not equals. The chief desire of Mu'awiya's latter day was to settle the succession. A natural desire to see his son succeed him was one cause; but there was another. The History of Islam from the time of Muhammad's death up to this plainly taught how dangerous it was to leave the succession unsettled. Rule from the Prophet there was none, for if there had been the succession would have certainly been settled thereby. There were abundant theories from the Ali's theory of divine right in Ali's house to the Kharijite theory of free election and deposition on account of misgovernment or sin, but no rule there was binding on the community at large. Mu'awiya tried to lay down such a rule and to convert the Caliphate into a hereditary Monarchy. In his way were two great obstacles; the character of his son Yezid and the old theocratic party at Mecca and Medina. The former was a sceptic, a wine-bibber and libertine, who cared not for the religious teachings of the Koran. The partisans of Ali were powerful in Arabia itself and his younger son was no unworthy representative of his race. Others there were too, conspicuously Abdulla the son of Zobeir, who considered themselves far fitter for the Caliphate than the decadent descendant of Abu Sofian. Mu'awiya, in one of the annual pilgrimages to Mecca, seized the opportunity to force the chief

men to swear allegiance to Yezid; with most he succeeded. Such forced submission was worth nothing, as the example of Zobeir and Talha, not many years before, had shown.

Mu'awiya died 680 A.D. (60-61 A.H.) after a long and prosperous reign. Under him, though war was constantly going on at the extremities of the Empire, the great Muhammadan Caliphate was at peace internally. After Ali's murder and Hassan's resignation we read little of Kharijites and Alides (the Shiahs came into existence later on) and the turbulent soldiery of Basora and Kufa, awed by Ziyad's rigorous rule, seem to have given but little trouble. The smouldering fires of discontent, however, were ever there, and when the strong hand was withdrawn these again burst out into flame. Yezid, his son, succeeded Mu'awiya. His short reign (three and a half years) was marked by an event, which shook the whole Muhammadan world and originated a schism which has lasted to this day.

Hossein, the younger son of Ali by Fatima, was residing at Mecca at the time of Mu'awiya's death. An invitation came to him from Kufa to go there and to assert his claim to the Caliphate. Before starting he thought it prudent to send his cousin, Muslim, to Kufa to ascertain the real state of affairs in that town, and to enquire whether its people, the fickle, turbulent residents, would receive him with open arms or not. This cousin met at first a favourable reception; but from Damascus came orders that Obeidullah, son of Ziyad, at the time Governor of Basora, should replace the former Governor at Kufa. Obeidullah's stern and rigorous character greatly resembled his father's. Secretly and swiftly

travelling from Basora, the new Governor reached Kufa before the people knew of his appointment. Coming stealthily into the town and pretending to be Hossein, he learnt which of the prominent citizens were supporters of the Alides. Then, assuming office he had Muslim arrested and put to death. In Kufa there was no party left which dared openly support the cause of Hossein.

Hossein was then advised to return but pressed on, hoping till almost the last that Kufa would rise in his favour. But Obeidullah had taken his precautions much too well. The Bedouins who had joined Hossein left him and when he reached Kerbala near the Euphrates, he had only with him the 30 horsemen and 40 foot, who had accompanied him from Mecca and a number of women and children. Obeidullah sent out first Al Mero (a chief of the tribe of Tenim) to bring him to the Governor. If he did not agree to come he might go any way he liked excepting to Mecca. Hossein refused though he was willing to go to Damascus to the Caliph. Then Obeidullah sent Omar, the son of Saad, the devouring lion of the Persian conquest. Again he was invited to surrender but again there was a refusal. Thereupon Obeidullah ordered that Hossein's little following should be cut off from the river and from all means of water and ordered Shimr (a name execrated by all Muhammadans) to bring Hossein dead or alive to Kufa. Hossein was determined, he knew his man well, that he would only be brought dead. On the final fatal day, the tenth of Mohurrum, the fight took place. Against overwhelming numbers Hossein and his little band struggled to the last. His brothers, cousins and other relations,

who were amongst his small force, died fighting. A boy of ten, his nephew, was amongst the slain. And at last he, too, was killed by an arrow. Not a man escaped. The women and children were brought to Obeidullah. They were not misused. When Hossein's gory head was thrown at Obeidullah's feet and he pushed it about with his staff, an indignant voice was heard to say—"Gently! It is the Prophet's grandson. By the Lord I have seen those very lips kissed by the blessed mouth of Muhammad." Such was the tragedy at Kerbala. And no event in Muhammadan History has been more deeply impressed on the Muhammadan mind. Sunni and Shiah alike lament the end of Hossein. But with the latter the lamentations are of a far deeper nature than with the former. To the Shiah, Mohurrum days are much what Passion week is to the Christians; to the Christians, Easter follows, but the Shiahs have no Easter or rather their Great Easter will only occur when the Mehdi will come and subdue all nations unto him, and thus far that Easter is not yet in sight.

The tenth of Mohurrum was the birthday of the Shiahs. Up to this day the claims of Ali's house, though urged, had not reached the dignity of a religious doctrine. But from this date onwards the Shiah Muhammadan holds the Imammate in the family of Ali to be a dogma equal to that of holding Muhammad to be the last and greatest of the Prophets.

At Medina all was in an uproar, Zobeir's son, the crafty fox as he was called, took advantage of the outcry to put himself at the head of the malcontents and had himself, after a brief delay, declared Caliph An embassy from Medina visited Damascus. There

they found the Court everything they considered a Court of God's Vice-regent should not be. Their report on their return to the Citizens of Medina was decisive. The people threw off their allegiance to the Godless Caliph (with three exceptions) in the traditional Arab method; each one of those assembled throwing off either his mantle, turban, clothes, or shoe. Against them was sent Abu Muslim a one-eyed schoolmaster. It is said none of the Koreishites at Damascus would undertake the task. Whether this was so or not, Yezid preferred the one-eyed schoolmaster. When it came to a fight Abdulla Ibn Zobeir was unable to make any effectual opposition. The force he raised was defeated in a bloody battle at Marra and the second sack of Medina ensued. For three days the Damascine soldiery, unchecked, sacked the town. They were about to proceed to Mecca when the news arrived of Yezid's death. Dissipation killed him. With his death, for the time being, fighting came to an end. It seemed doubtful as to whether the Ommayad rule could continue. The immediate heirs, according to Muhammadan Law, were persons of tender age. But there was one of the family Merwan, old and experienced, who had been with Othman at Medina at the time of his death and had nearly shared the Caliph's fate. At this critical moment he took charge of the Ommayad's fortunes. He was a man rather of cunning than of wisdom, more of a fox than a lion, but it was through him all the same that the Ommayads and the Syrian army retained their supremacy over Islam.

A.D. 683.

The whole question of who was the lawful Caliph and how he should be chosen had again

arisen. The eventual answer was: the rightful Caliph was the strongest; but it took years to find out who this was. At first everything seemed in favour of Ibn Zobeir. His father was one of the earliest of the Prophet's followers. He had protested against the murder of Othman and taken arms against Ali. Ibn Zobeir resided at Medina, which (although it had ceased to be the centre of the Caliphate) was still a Holy City and respected as such and his reputation for piety was great. But the Syrians had long lost their first religious enthusiasm, and their great desire was to maintain the supremacy which they had owned under Mu'awiya.

Merwan, whom we have just mentioned, only reigned one year. During this time a great fight took place not far from Damascus at Marj Rahit between the northern and southern Arabs. The latter, who comprised the greater part of the Syrian Army, were strong supporters of the Ommayads. According to Dozy this particular fight originated in a quarrel about the plucking of some melons. But the result was decisive. Merwan was supported by the southerners and with their triumph the Ommayad's rule in Syria became consolidated. Until the last days this family had never any trouble in Syria itself. Merwan himself, as I have above said, did not live to enjoy his triumph long. It is stated that he was smothered by the widow of Yezid, whom he had married, and whose children's claims to the Caliphate he had ignored. After him came Abdul Malik, who reigned 21 years, and whose reign was marked by a further consolidation and spread of Muhammadan rule. In fact we have to go back to Omar's rule for the definite supremacy of Damascus

A.D. 683.

as the Capital of the Islam world of that day. At the beginning of his reign everything seemed adverse. Excepting Syria, he had no hold on the Empire. In Persia, the Kharijites were everywhere burning and massacring in the name of religion. Basora and Kufa held, as far as they ever held long to any cause, to Ibn Zobeir who also was recognised in Egypt. A first attempt to recover Medina was defeated. Musab, brother of Ibn Zobeir, held Basora for him. This Musab was attacked from time to time by the Kharijites, who were willing to make friends with him if he publicly justified Othman's death. This he could not of course do, as his father and his brother for whom he was now acting, had consistently declared the deed unrighteous and the father had warred against Ali to revenge the same. Another enemy, too, came now on the scene, Mukhtar, the son of the Obeid who, in the early days of the Persian wars, had been slain in the battle of the Bridge. He had been a partisan of Hossein, though not present at the massacre of Kerbala. Struck at that time by Obeidullah a blow, which blinded him in one eye, he swore on his escape that he would one day revenge the eye by cutting Obeidullah into a thousand bits. In the confusion that ensued after the death of Yezid with the help of the Kharijites and especially of Ibn Al-Ashtar, the son of Ali's ablest lieutenant, he became master of Kufa. His taking possession of the town was preceded by house-to-house fighting. On his victory, short shrift was given to any connected with the massacre at Kerbala. In particular Shimr, the most hated of all, was slain. Amongst Arab virtues, mercy holds a very minor place and none

was shown in this instance to the defeated party. Next year he met in battle on the Zab, Obeidullah advancing from Mosul. Amongst the latter's troops were northern Arabs and they had not forgotten Marj Rahit; Obeidullah was defeated and slain; and so Mukhtar wreaked the vengeance he had sworn to wreak. The main actors of the Kerbala Tragedy did not long survive that day.

A.D. 686.

Mukhtar was really the champion of the Persian clients fighting against their Arab masters; but their time had not yet come. Aided by Muhallab, a General who had been fighting off and on with the Kharijites, Musab attacked Mukhtar. The latter was totally defeated and driven into Kufa. Forced by hunger to sally from there, he died fighting. His followers surrendered at discretion. Musab disgraced his triumph by wholesale massacre. History gives the number at 7,000 to 8,000, of which 700 were Arabs. This slaughter was fatal to the cause of Ibn Zobeir, who quarrelled with his brother over it. Little by little Abdul Malik got the better of his enemies. By gross treachery he got possession of his cousin Amr Ibn Said. Promising to spare his life and granting him a deed of pardon he induced him to enter his palace. When there, he told him that he had sworn to put him in chains, but that if he was allowed to do so, he would forthwith release him. To this Amr agreed, but as soon as he was bound, the Caliph smote him and directed his brother to put him to death. Finding in the evening that he had not done so, he killed him with his own hands. The widow, asked to return the deed of pardon, answered: "It is in the grave with my husband that he may arraign thee before his Lord thereby."

Next he dealt with Musab. The forces met near Kirkesia. Treachery was ripe in Musab's camp. Muhallab was too hard pressed by the Kharijites to help him, and he and his faithful friend Ibn Al-Ashtar fell fighting. And so Irak fell into Abdul Malik's hands. Egypt had been won for him long before. And now only Arabia remained. Ibn Zobeir had remained during all these events inactive at Mecca. He had rebuilt the Holy House, but he had done nothing to maintain himself as Caliph or to oust Abdul Malik, and now this last sent Hajjaj to complete the work and to make Abdul Malik the sole Caliph of Islam. Hajjaj was an extremely able officer; his cruelties are even now proverbial in the Muhammadan East, but there is no doubt of his ability. He had no respect and showed none to the Holy Cities. Ibn Zobeir asked his mother whether he should submit or fight. She, an aged lady, one who had been a companion of Muhammad, gave the only advice, befitting an Arab matron. "Submit with it or fight on it," she told him and on it, it was. He was killed in the battle in Mecca. After his death no longer do Mecca or Medina have any political importance. Seventy years had only elapsed since the year of the Hejira A.D. 622 when the Prophet had fled from the first to the second town. Abdul Malik was now the undisputed Ruler of the Muhammadan world. Only one of the Governors, Abdullah Ibn Kazim of Khorasan, ventured to refuse to recognise him and he was within a very short time defeated and killed by the Under-Governor of Merv whom the Caliph had prevailed upon to attack him. This Ibn Kazim had many enemies and his death was hailed with satisfaction.

A.D. 692.

During the rest of Abdul Mallik's reign in the Asiatic portion of the Islamite Empire, save in Syria, directly under the Caliph, Hajjaj ruled supreme. Writers in the Abbasid period are never too favourable to any of the leading men of the Ommayads' time, but no one have they painted in darker colours than Hajjaj. Even from their hostile accounts we can see the man had very great capacity. Cruel, he was absolutely careless of human life or human suffering. If he had been arraigned of this, he would have probably replied that others, his contemporaries, were equally cruel but wanted either his ability or power. On his assumption of power he found an exceedingly difficult task before him. He was Governor of Irak and as such it was necessary to bring under his control the unruly inhabitants of Basora and Kufa. Then, although Abdul Mallik was now prayed for in all the Mosques of the Muhammadan world, the Kharijites abounded specially in Persia where the Arab was never beloved, and where secret Shiah conspiracies were ever being hatched. Hajjaj's first business was to deal with the people of Basora. With only a small mounted escort he travelled to that town and entered the City without his arrival being known to the people. Entering the Great Mosque at the time of morning prayer, he mounted the pulpit and sat there for a time with muffled head. "To prayers," he cried; the people thinking him a Kharijite prepared to stone him; great was their terror when he unmuffled and they saw who he was. Stern were his warnings; "Many heads are like the corn ripe for reaping; many a head I see before me seems as if gory from blood." When the Caliph's letter appointing him their Governor was read aloud,

the people were slow in their response to the greeting of peace with which such letters commenced. "Disrespect to the Caliph," he cried, "I will teach you better." The frightened crowd needed no further exhortation; when the greeting was re-read at Hajjaj's order, the response was hearty and universal enough. His immediate purpose was to enforce their joining the army of Muhallab, which had been hard pressed by the Kharijites and from which many of them had deserted. It will be remembered that these cities were inhabited by Arab tribes who by the terms of their tenure were bound to military service. "All who would not join and proceed within three days to this army," he declared, "would be put to death." And this order he had carried out with remorseless severity. In a mutiny which followed amongst his troops outside Basora, he was at one time almost alone. He prevailed in the end and many executions followed. Amongst them was that of the son of Amru, a body servant of the Prophet and the last link between the Prophet and the Muhammadans of Hajjaj's time. Amru himself was reviled, his property confiscated, but here for once Hajjaj had gone too far. He was rebuked by the Caliph and ordered to do all honour to the aged man. The Kharijites were unsubdued. They swarmed everywhere, and like so many persecuted sects Donatists, Anabaptists and others where they got the upper hand, were guilty of the grossest cruelty. Muhallab encountered and defeated them again and again, but they seemed everywhere to spring from the soil and to recommence their onslaughts on all who acknowledged Abdul Malik as Caliph. We have a letter of one of their chiefs Saleh, who had been a Koran teacher; in this

after declaring that submission to God, no fear of death, and separation from non-believers were duties of all true believers, he relates the history of Islam. "Abu Bakr and Omar were godly men who ruled according to God's will; but Othman did not; he divided the spoil amongst his relations, left the boundaries of the Realm without protection and was righteously put to death; then came Ali who put men's judgment higher than God's and was not therefore rightly the Caliph." He does not say who the rightful Caliph was when he wrote; but ends with an exhortation to fight for God, and a reminder that those who do so will find the Houris of Paradise awaiting them. Saleh was soon killed, but Shebib, another Koran reader, who was the joint leader of the Kharijites with him, and, who after his death, became their sole chief, kept the troops of the Caliph at bay for years. He actually more than once captured Kufa itself. All the country-side people were his partisans, and through them he was kept informed of the whereabouts and numbers of the hostile armies. These armies chiefly consisted of inhabitants of Irak whose hearts were only half in their work. At last Shebib was drowned and for the time the Kharijites, who had kept Persia in a tumult for many years (they were also known as Azrakites) were suppressed. The chief instrument of their suppression, Muhallab, was highly honoured by the Caliph and Hajjaj and made Governor of Khorasan and Seyistan. He died in the year 82 Hejira. A.D. 702.

Soon after, there grew for Hajjaj and the Caliph another and more pressing trouble. One Abdur Rahman Ibn Al-Ashath was the Commander of the army in the east and north-east of Persia. As

such he invaded the territory of Zenbil, King of Kabul. A General of experience, he advanced into the mountainous country slowly and cautiously, leaving small garrisons everywhere behind. Hajjaj accused him, by letters, of cowardice and laziness and urged him to a speedy attack on Zenbil. Convoking his troops, Ibn Al-Ashath addressed them and told them what had been written. They unanimously denounced Hajjaj and proclaimed Ibn Al-Ashath as their leader. He promptly marched against Hajjaj who for a time was in great danger. Basora and Kufa both temporarily fell into the hands of the rebels. Finally, thanks to a large reinforcement of Syrian troops (the Irak men were of but little use), Ibn Al-Ashath was defeated and he fled to Zenbil. Different stories are current of his end; according to one, Zenbil beheaded him and sent his head to Hajjaj, who had promised Zenbil to give in such case a large remission of his tribute; according to another, he died a natural death, but Zenbil had his head cut off after death and sent it to Hajjaj; according to a third, Zenbil did not have him beheaded, but sent him bound to the Governor of Seyistan and on the way he committed suicide. In any case his head was despatched to Hajjaj. Another rebellion took place in the Eastern Provinces. Yezid, the son of Muhallab, put this down, but sparing some of the chiefs, probably on account of tribal relationship, was removed from his Governorship. Hajjaj, in this case, too, shed blood freely and remorselessly.

There was still one more trouble on the eastern frontier. Musa, a noble Arab, owing to trouble with the Governor of Khorasan, set up as an independent ruler beyond the Oxus. Muhallab left him alone and

for 15 years he ruled the part of Trans-Oxiana, which was then Mussulman. At last one of Muhallab's sons, seemingly on his own account, attacked and killed him. Hajjaj was by no means pleased, as Musa was a Koreishite, of the same tribe as Hajjaj himself. This eastern frontier of the Empire and the internal troubles, caused by Mussulman dissensions and rebellions, prevented the Empire during this reign from any great extension in that quarter.

One result, of all this trouble, was that a new City Wasit was built, half way between Basora and Kufa and garrisoned by Syrians. The two old Cities were too full of malcontents for the Caliph to be sure of their allegiance at any time and it was considered necessary to erect a third, which would bridle these two. The Syrians and Irakis had never been friendly and Wasit was an open sign that the distrust of the Syrians and of the Court of Damascus of the inhabitants of Irak, was becoming more and more acute. Another feature of the Hajjaj's rule was that owing to the severity of taxation, of the uncertainty of their life the country-folk of Irak came crowding into the towns. To stop this Hajjaj had resource to the most stringent measures, branding the names of their districts on men's hands. These measures stayed the migration and the consequent decrease of revenue arising from the country lands, but naturally did not increase the country-folk's love of Hajjaj.

In the early part of Abdul Malik's reign, after various fights, raids and invasions by the Mussulmans in Asia Minor and Armenia and by the Byzantines into Syria, peace was concluded whereby the Caliph had to pay to the Greek Emperor certain

sums of money. Abdul Malik found such a treaty, though humiliating, necessary, as he was at the time undisputed ruler of Syria alone. But with the death of Abdulla Ibn Zobeir and the reunion of all the Mussulman kingdoms into one state, the necessity ceased. The first breach, however, came from the side of Constantinople. The Emperor objected to the new coins, which were minted by the Caliph. Formerly Byzantine or Persian coins had been in use in the Mussulman State, but new coins were being issued from Arab mint with Arabic impressions stating the unity of God and the Prophetship of Muhammad, which the Greek Emperor considered were an insult to himself and his religion. The war was carried on with no definite result. We read a good deal about atrocities but these do not seem to have been exceptional, save that the Mussulmans seem to have done a special amount of Church burning. Antioch once more, this time, suffered pillage at the hands of the Greeks.

In Africa, the Muhammadans under Okba made considerable way pushing on as far as Tangiers. Okba was however defeated and slain in a battle with the Berbers, who retook Kairwan the Mussulman Capital of N. W. Africa in A.H. 74. Then Hassan Ibn Noman, the new Governor of N. W. Africa began again to push forward the Muhammadan arms. The Berbers and the Greeks who assisted them were defeated in bloody battles and the whole of the lost land regained. A female ruler, who was also esteemed as a Prophetess, was betrayed by an Arab (whom she befriended) and slain. Shortly before the close of the Caliphate of Abdul Malik, Hassan Ibn Noman was succeeded by Musa, who

A.D. 693.

was afterwards to be famous in connection with the conquest of Spain. During this reign the first sea raid on Sicily is said to have been made.

In these wars Carthage finally passed into Muhammadan hands and with its passing Greek rule in Africa came to an end.

Abdul Malik was anxious that his son Welid should, in his life-time, be declared his successor. Merwan, his father, had in his will desired that after Abdul Malik, his brother Abdul Aziz would succeed. The latter steadfastly refused to give up his claims, but on his death, all the notabilities of the realm agreed to Welid's succession excepting one obstinate inhabitant of Medina, who declared it sinful to name a Caliph while a Caliph lived. Whipped and threatened with death, he maintained true to his convictions. Whether his objections were good or not is for Mussulman Doctors to decide, but it undoubtedly stood on good substantial ground, as being the only doctrine compatible with the freedom of choice of all believers.

Abdul Mallik desired to make Jerusalem, and not Mecca or Medina, the centre and the Holy City of Islam. In this he was doubtless inspired by political motives. Jerusalem was near to Damascus and could easily be controlled from there. Between Damascus and Mecca and Medina were great sandy deserts. He failed, naturally, as Mecca and Medina and not Jerusalem were the places where Muhammad had lived and to have stopped the pilgrimage to Mecca would really have been to check Muhammadan life at its very source.

In another matter he was more successful. The language and the accounts of the Diwan became

Arabic instead of Persian or Greek as before. But it must be remembered, by this time that numerous Persians and Greeks had learnt Arabic. Something similar happened in India under the early Great Moghuls when Persianised Urdu became the Governmental language. By that time many Hindus had learnt Persian.

A.D. 705.

Abdul Malik's death marks a point in the History of Islam. Before his time in the first great rush after the death of the Prophet, Syria, Egypt and Persia had become politically at least a part of Islam. In the first two countries political subordination was attended by change of faith. The great majority of the people became Muhammadans and their descendants have been so ever since. With Persia the cause of conversion was slower, and when conversion came, there came a modification of the faith. Shiahism, the national religion of Persians, is based largely on Persian national characteristics and history. To understand it, a knowledge of Persian history including a knowledge of Zoroastrianism is necessary.

Welid succeeded his father Abdul Malik. His reign of 10 years is perhaps the most notable of all the Ommayad's reigns, as far as the extension of Islam is concerned. Indeed, it stands in this respect only second to that of Omar himself, and even with that reign as far as external conquests are concerned, it bears not an unfavourable comparison. Sir William Muir says : "Looking at it from first to last we shall not find on the annals of the Caliphate a more glorious reign than that of Welid." For the first time a Muhammadan army reached India and by the conquest of Sind laid a foundation for the subsequent

Muhammadan invasions and conquests in India which have had so great a part in bringing about the India of the present day. In his time Trans-Oxiana was really conquered and thus the Islamic power reached to the confines of China. In the west not only did during these 10 years the Muhammadan power stretch to the Atlantic, but they also saw the foundation of its nearly 800 years rule in Spain, a rule the effects of which are apparent even now.

Before turning in detail to any of these conquests, I would first say a word or two about what has been considered by Historians as the great blot of his reign. On his accession he appointed Omar his cousin, who afterwards succeeded to the Caliphate, as Governor of Arabia. The most important duty of the Governor of this country, and the one which had the most attention paid to it then as now, was the superintendence of the two Holy Cities (Mecca and Medina). Omar was a pious Muhammadan to whom matters of religion were more important not only in word but in deed than those of worldly advantage; he ruled, as might be expected, these towns with a very light hand, reverencing them in a way Ommayad Rulers very rarely did as being the scenes of the life of the Prophet. The consequence was that they were filled with refugees from Irak specially from the two big towns of Basora and Kufa; those who had fled there from the tyranny of Hajjaj. The latter complained to the Caliph who thought it necessary to replace Omar by a sterner ruler. The new Governor forbade the townsmen of Mecca and Medina from receiving these fugitives, and directed the latter to return at once under pain of death to

Irak. The orders so given were strictly carried out. Hajjaj himself died, fortunately for himself, shortly before the Caliph, for, as will be seen hereafter, his enemies obtained a complete ascendency in the next reign, and it is exceedingly unlikely that when his subordinates were treated with ignominy and often with imprisonment, torture and death, that he would have escaped unscathed. I have already pointed out that Hajjaj is known to us from Abbaside authorities; of his indifference to human life and suffering there can be no doubt; his executions are to be numbered by the thousand. But at the same time it must be remembered that wholesale slaughter was not then regarded with the abhorrence which it is now, and that it is difficult to see how, without great severity, he could have kept the turbulent tribesmen of Kufa and Basora in order, and from them obtained the necessary troops alike to crush the Kharijites who swarmed in Persia and to maintain the frontier garrisons. What seems to be certain is that even in his time, and in spite of his endeavours, Irak was gradually ceasing to be the garden of the east. Its revenue was falling and the canals on which its prosperity was based were, owing to incessant civil wars, being neglected.

The leader of the expedition to India was Muhammad Ibn Al Kasim, a cousin of Hajjaj. He pushed through what is now Baluchistan towards the Indus. Resistance was first met at Deibal; then the port near the mouth of the Indus, now a considerable distance away from the same, and the Capital of Sind. It is told that a stone from an enormous catapult having struck the pinnacle of the temple on which the red flag of their god was

displayed, the King took flight, was pursued, defeated and slain. For the first time we read of what was so commonly the case afterwards, the immolation of females rather than that they should fall into the hands of Muhammadan conquerors. The King's wives deliberately set fire to the palace and were burnt with all its inmates. Pushing on he reached Multan. After a long siege it surrendered at discretion. The fighting men were slain, a large part of the population, including a crowd of pilgrims to the shrine of Buddha, were carried into slavery. This Muhammadan invasion of India did not reach further than Multan. Sind was Muhammadanised for ever. But further invasions ceased for the next three centuries. Their renewal was then not the work of the Arabs, but of the tribes from the Highlands of Afghanistan, and Central Asia who by that time had become, in Asia at least, the real propagators of Islam and the representatives of Muhammadan Rule.

Equally lasting were the wars of Qutaiba to the north of the Oxus. Up to this time this river had been practically the limit of the Mussulman power. There had been, indeed, endless raids and numerous battles on the northern side, but Muhammadanism had failed to get any secure hold on the countries beyond this river. The subjugation of these lands was a matter of supreme importance to Islam. Up to this time its support was almost entirely Arab. The Persian had been coerced into submission. With the conquest of Trans-Oxiana, the Turk comes on the scene, a race whose national characteristics are very different from those of the Arabs. And as regards the political, not the intellectual power of

Islam, it is the Turk who has been the predominant power ever since. It is only in Africa that the Arab has held his own. Elsewhere, in Constantinople and Delhi alike, the ruling race has been Turkish not Arabian.

The Oxus, too, marks the boundary between Turan and Iran, a distinction going far back into antiquity. Iran was the country, its people, the people of light; Turan, of darkness. Gog and Magog in the Koran come from Central Asia, and so, too, in Roman and Greek History. There was an enormous difference between the Greeks' and Romans' dealing with the Parthian or Persian Kingdoms, rival states contesting with them the supremacy of whether Asia, organised with the whole apparatus of civilized administration and the wild tribes, Scythians, Huns, and others which pressed from time to time on the Greeks and Romans. Behind these Central Asian tribes, often ruling, constantly influencing them, came the Chinese. But though there are millions of Chinese Mussulmans, China has never come into the orbit of political Islam.

As to Qutaiba's conquests I do not propose to relate them in detail, sufficient to say that in the ten years of Welid's reign commencing with Balkh he took Bokhara and Samarkund and established Muhammadan rule permanently in what are now known as the Central Asia Khanates. Qutaiba partook of the nature of Hajjaj, and there are more stories than one of his perfidy. Inducing one of the Kinglets, who ruled over a part of the Province, to enter his camp on a promise of safe conduct, he obtained from Hajjaj permission and put him to death. On another occasion he slew all the hostages

he had, in retaliation for one of his hostages having been slain. Altogether he was a hard, unfeeling man and as such he had few to bewail the fate which befell him in the next reign. Amongst his prisoners was the wife of Barmek, a physician. She was taken as a slave girl into the harem of Abdullah, Qutaiba's brother. While such, she had a child known as Khalid, the Barmecide. From him the well-known family of the Barmecides trace their descent.

Of almost as great importance as the conquest of Trans-Oxiana, though for different reasons, was the Muhammadan conquest of Spain. For more than seven centuries this endured and it was not till the end of the fifteenth century with the fall of Granada that the Mussulman rule in Spain came to a final end. The Mussulmans lost, indeed, a great part of the country long before this, but their influence both in the way of attraction and repulsion has left to this day a decided impress on the Spanish national character. The fierce intolerance of the Spanish race in matters of religion owes its origin largely to the incessant wars between Christian and Pagan. And according to the best authorities there is a considerable mixture of Arab Mussulman and Jewish blood in the Spaniard for the Jews found in Islam generally a far more favourable home than the Christendom of the Dark and Middle ages, and certainly there are strains, still existing showing Arab influence, in Spanish thought and character. I lay emphasis on the Arab influence; Berbers accompanied the Arabs to Spain, but of their national character influencing the Spanish there is little proof.

The story of the conquest of Spain is one that has lent itself to much romance. When Welid ascended

the throne, Musa, a Yemeni Arab, was appointed by Abdul Aziz, the Governor of Egypt, as his Vice-regent, in which was included what we now know as the Barbary Coast. As such he pushed his conquests to the extreme west and brought the North Africa Coast entirely into Arab subjection. At Tangier he left in charge Tarik, a freed man of his. Tangier is not far from Spain and Tarik had a visitor in Count Julian, a Spanish noble, who was Governor of a portion of the Spanish Coast opposite. This Count Julian's daughter is said to have been seduced by King Roderick, who was then the ruling Prince of the Gothic Kingdom of Spain. Roderick was not the rightful king, and in any case the mass of the Spanish people loved not their Gothic rulers. Although they now professed Catholicism, their ancestors had been strong Aryans and the Aryan strain which was really national almost as much as religious was still strong. And then taxation was heavy and oppressive. And so when Tarik crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, his real opponents were the Gothic armies, I might add the priests, but not the Spanish people. His first exploit was to seize Gibraltar. From there he ravaged the surrounding country. Roderick marched against the invaders, reinforced Tarik, met him at Medina-Sidonia near the River Guadalite. The result was decisive. The Spanish army was totally defeated, Roderick disappeared, drowned so it was believed, and the Gothic Kingdom came to an end. After this there was nothing like a general engagement. Town after town was taken either by siege or famine or surrendered voluntarily. With true instinct Tarik pressed straight to Toledo, the then capital, where he

found no resistance. Within two years the greater part of Spain fell into Muhammadan hands.

Musa was jealous of his freedman's success. Crossing into Spain he also besieged and took cities of which Merida alone offered any protracted opposition. When he met Tarik, he accused him of keeping back a part of the booty, and is said to have maltreated his victorious freedman in other ways. So at least it was reported to the Caliph, who ordered Musa's recall. To the first message he paid no heed. A second and sterner message he was forced to obey. Taking Tarik with him and leaving his sons rulers of Spain, he shortly travelled through Africa and Egypt to Damascus. This place he did not reach till after the Caliph's death. Like all the great Generals of Welid's reign, he found no favour with his successor.

Welid reigned 10 years. On his death Suleiman, his brother, succeeded without opposition. Sir William Muir quotes a saying of the times, "Welid took to wit, Suleiman to the harem and good living, his successor Omar to piety." However this may be, the first work of his reign was to degrade and punish all his brother's chief Generals. Hajjaj fortunately died before Welid. Abu Kasim was imprisoned and tortured. Abdul Aziz, Musa's son, who was ruling in Spain, was treacherously slain. Yezid, Muhallab's son, replaced Kutaiba; the latter tried to rebel but was deserted by his men and slain. Musa was himself ill-treated by the new Sultan. Tarik seems to have been left alone; anyhow from now he disappears from public life. Yezid seems to have been the most cruel of the new Mussulman Governors. We read that after taking Jinjar, a

town in Trans-Oxiana, he swore he would not stay his sword till he had eaten bread made from corn ground by the blood of his defenders. And so when the town was taken, he massacred them till their blood, mixed with a stream, that turned a mill wheel close by. He was also avaricious to the extreme. He refused the Viceroyalty of Persia on the ground of its having been so thoroughly squeezed out that he could extract nothing more.

Suleiman's reign is chiefly notable for the second siege of Constantinople. It was defended by Leo the Isaurian, the founder of one of the few vigorous dynasties that reigned in Byzantium after the days of Constantine. Greek fire destroyed the Caliph's fleet. A large part of the Mussulman army was encamped in Europe, but could make no impression on the defences. Cold, famine, pestilence all continued to sweep the assailants away. The siege was still on when Suleiman died. His successor, the pious Omar, delayed in ordering back the remains of the army left, and when they were so ordered, but a poor remnant was left.

Suleiman's reign lasted a year and a half. As I have already pointed out, it is chiefly notable as an instance where a new Eastern Sovereign set aside his predecessor's chief men, and this, whether they had been successful in the charges entrusted to them or not.

His successor was Omar, named in histories as Omar II, of whom I have already spoken as governing Arabia so mildly that he had to be displaced. Alone amongst the various occupants of the throne of Damascus, he took the Koran as his rule of life. The authorities unanimously

A.D. 717.

speak of him as a Saint. But a Saint is not always the wisest ruler, and his lack of worldly wisdom injured the Caliphate not a little in a vital point, the finances. A recent instance in the Roman Church offers, in many ways, a parallel. Pious X was chosen for his saintliness, but as far as worldly relations were concerned he was a failure, compared with the success of his predecessor Leo XIII, the politician. Omar's motto was that God had sent the Prophet to convert mankind and not to collect revenue from them. And so in his time the finances got into great confusion, remission being given to the Mussulmans of taxes, such as the land tax which had been levied on them since the time of Mu'awiya. He tried, but failed to revert to the old policy of the first Omar whereby Mussulmans were not permitted to hold land out of Arabia. To the Christians and Jews, he was severe, his desire being to convert them to Muhammadanism. His reign, however, was too short to achieve much in this way, save in Khorasan and Central Asia. But though firm, he was just. The Christians of Damascus had been deprived of the Church of St. John in that town by Welid, though it was theirs by treaty right. He could not give it back, as once a Mosque always a Mosque is a rule of Mussulman law, but he gave them the Church of St. Thomas to which they had no right. He allowed the Kharijites to approach him and discuss the merits of their creed. His own creed was probably not very different from theirs. And he stopped the cursing of Ali, which his predecessors from the time of Mu'awiya had sanctioned or acquiesced in. Cursing has been the cause of much trouble in the Mussulman

world. Nowadays cursing, I believe, is hardly known amongst the Sunnis, but the cursing of the first three Caliphs is still prevalent on certain days of Mohurrum, amongst many of the Shiahs and tends to intensify the feelings of hostility between the two sects. His own expenses were small. Unlike the other Caliphs of the Ommayad House, he indulged neither in women nor the luxuries of the table, and his household budget was of the most modest scale. On his accession to the Caliphate, he made his wife, the daughter of Abdul Mallik, give over to the State the wealth she had amassed. He had no sympathy with the avaricious Governors of his predecessors. He demanded from Yezid, the son of Muhallab and Governor of Khorasan and Trans-Oxiana, accounts of those cruelties we have written above and, on his failing to give them, banished him to Yemen. This Yezid, on finding that the non-Mussulmans of Khorasan and Central Asia were getting converted in shoals in order to gain a part of the good things of Muhammadanism, for with Omar all Mussulmans were alike freed from many taxes, insisted on enforcing circumcision on the newly converted. This the Caliph forbade, as not sanctioned by the Koran. Omar's reign lasted two and a half years. It is stated that he refused to be treated in his sickness, stating that God's will, whatever course he might take, would be done. Amongst the Caliphs from the time of Mu'awiya up to the last Ommayad, there is no more striking and more attractive character than his. Like Julian at Rome, his character stands out in clear contrast to both those who went before and those who came after him.

His cousin Yezid succeeded, known as Yezid II, son of Abdul Mallik, who got himself nominated as his successor by Suleiman. With his accession the North Arabians, the sons of Modhar, came into power again. His wife was a niece of Hajjaj. When Suleiman was reigning, Yezid, Muhallab's son, had, at the Caliph's orders, confiscated the great wealth she had inherited from her father. Her husband then swore that should he ever came to power, he would cut this rascal into a thousand pieces. The pious Omar had banished Yezid, Muhallab's son, into exile in Yemen. As soon as he heard of the Caliph's sickness he escaped to Basora, the source and centre of all the disaffections of the time. There he raised an army and soon became master of all Irak, and even a part of the country east of the Tigris. From Khorasan, where he had long been Governor, he received no help. He was too well remembered. Against him came an army of Syrians. Yezid wished to attack, but two religious fanatics in his army objected, stating it was against the law laid down in the Koran. First denounce publicly the ungodly race said they. Such fanatical objections, as we have seen in the story of the rise of Kharijites, have had much influence on many occasions in the history of Islam, and in this case one of the objectors was the Judge of Basora who had urged the people to consecrate Yezid the son of Muhallab and at whose advice he had been elected. And so Yezid, notorious beyond all men of his age for his profligacy, had openly to object to the Ommayads as a godless race, who followed not the law and the Prophet. Whether this was true or not, it hardly lay in his mouth to say so. He was defeated and slain. The

remaining leaders deserted Irak and fled for safety to a fortress in Kerman. There, refuge was denied them. Captured, they were beheaded or otherwise slain and their wives and children sold as slaves. They deserved their fate as on their defeat they had beheaded the prisoners in their hands. "And so," says Sir William Muir, "perished the house of Al Muhallab, none of whose descendants were worthy representatives of that great man."

On the Northern and North-Eastern frontiers affairs were not prosperous. In the North by the Caspian the old Scythian tribes, the Khozars, Kipchaks and others prevented further progress, and in Trans-Oxiana the Turks, whose time as rulers of the Caliphate had not come yet and who were still non-believers, did not give the Mussulmans, whose leaders seem to have been incapable, much opportunity of consolidating their conquests.

In this reign, too, we hear the first mutterings of two storms which were eventually to burst at the two opposite ends of the Caliphate, the Alide and Abbaside revolt against the Ommayads in the East and South-East and the dissension between the Berbers and the Arabs in Spain, both of which led to fateful consequences. Both of these find their place better in the next reign.

In this year it is related that the last of the companions who had seen and heard the Prophet, died at Mecca aged 101. The old world of Muhammad had long passed away. With Ali, indeed, it really came to an end, and only lingering marks of it are to be found with the death of the sons of Zobeir. New men, new policy, new manners, new ways of thinking.

Yezid had the reputation of being inordinately fond of his Harem and we are told he died one week after his favourite slave girl Habbaba. It is related that he refused for days to let her be buried, clinging to her dead body, and when at last he was persuaded to allow her funeral, he never recovered and within a week died. His brother Hisham succeeded him. His reign of 20 years is chiefly notable for two things, first of all, the germination of the feelings of detestation towards the house of Ommayad, which eventually destroyed it, and secondly, the decisive battle of Tours which set a limit to the expansion of Islam in Europe. The families of the Hashimites, from whom the Prophet, his son-in-law Ali, and his uncle Abbas were descended, and the Ommayads had a common ancestor in Old Munaf, the great, great grandfather of Muhammad. The representative of the Ommayads in the days of the Prophet was Abu Sofian, who for many years was bitterly opposed to Islam, and but narrowly escaped from being put to death when Muhammad took Mecca. According to both those that held that the Caliphate should remain in the hand of Hashimites (persons whom we might describe in modern day terms as the legitimists) and to the Kharijites (the extreme republicans of Islam), had the Ommayads any rights to the Caliphate? Their election by the people was a farce. Mu'awiya ruled by virtue of his right hand, his successors by the selection of the reigning Caliph and the people's confirmation was limited to the Syrians at Damascus. As regards those that supported the descendants of Hashim, they were divided into parties, the supporters of the house of Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of

A.D. 724.

A. D. 732.

the Prophet, and the supporters of the descendants of Abbas, the Prophet's uncle. The latter hinted that one of Ali's grandsons had bequeathed on his death-bed his right to Muhammad, the great-grandson of Abbas. This was probably a fable, in any case no such bequest could be made by the Muhammadan law, but it was good enough to soothe the conscience of many. And the Abbasides became by degrees more formidable than the Alides. The latter, like their founder, seem to have been simple and credulous folk and to have acted as an excellent mark for the former. Both, however, hated the godless race of the Ommayads and their emissaries swarmed everywhere, painting the reigning family in the darkest colours. And there is but little doubt that the precepts of the Koran did not hold the foremost place in the Court of Damascus. More than one of the Ommayads were princes endowed with a high degree of capacity and power of ruling, but theirs was essentially a rule based on the maxims of worldly policy and not on the law of the Prophet. Irak was always turbulent and inclined to be on the side of rebellion against authority and it was in Irak that trouble first arose. But the real centre of Ommayad activity was Persia and particularly Khorasan, N. E. Persia. The strife was largely one between Persian and Arab and the former was intent on coming into his own again.

The first outbreak took place on behalf of the Alides. Zeid Ibn Ali, great-grandson of Hossein, was living in Irak. He was securing his position by marriage in various Yemeni families, and thought himself thereby strong enough to claim the Caliphate as Ali's lawful successor.

Kufa, the headquarters of all discontents, was the place where he chose to thus declare himself. For months he was enlisting supporters in this town, it is said that thousands had promised him their support. To warnings that the Kufites were strong in words but poor in deeds, as at Kerbala, he paid no heed; one night he paraded the street with the Shiah banner in front and the Shiah cry shouted by his followers, but instead of the numerous supporters he expected, only a few persons (not more than 200) joined his standard. Asking where his friends were, some said they had been shut up in the Great Mosque. His little force arriving there was met with showers of stones. He retired to the great storehouse of the town for the night but next morning was attacked by the Governor. His little band was cut to pieces. He was killed and secretly buried, but his burial place being discovered, his body was crucified on the walls of a Church, his head sent to Damascus where it was stuck on one of the gates and after a time sent for a similar purpose to Medina. The rebellion was a failure. The Alides, as the leading discontents, began from this time to yield the pride of place to the Abbasides.

In Spain, it was in this reign that the Northern pressure of Spanish Muhammadans met a check. The whole of Spain, save a small part of the wild Western hilly country, known now as Astorth, had fallen into their hands without much serious fighting. It was only in the North-West that a native ruler still survived the storm that had swept the Visigoth Monarchy away. Leaving this on one side, the Mussulman armies entered Southern France. There they found the rulers divided

amongst themselves, and from time to time they were joined by one or other of them. So Marseilles, Nîmes and Narbonne fell into their hands. The greater part of Medieval Acquitania became theirs. But at last they met a stronger foe. Charles Martel or Hammer was the Mayor of the Palace ruling Northern and Eastern France under the nominal overlordship of the Merovingians. Mussulmans and Frank met at the battle of Tours, the result of which was long doubtful, and which the Muhammadans were said to have lost through fears for their camp. Abdur Rahman, the Mussulman General, was killed. The battle has been named, by Creasy, as one of the fifteen decisive battles of the World and rightly so. From this date onward there was no fear of the Mussulmans conquering the countries of the West. Again invasions will come from Asia to Europe. The Mongols and kindred races will invade Europe again and again from the East, and the Osmanli Turk will bring to an end the Eastern Roman Empire in the South-East. But to the west there will be no further danger. England, France, Germany's national lives will not be troubled by the invasion of the Southern races. In these Spanish wars not a small element of weakness was the fact that unlike conquests in the East, the greater part of the conquerors were Berbers. Between them and the Arabs no love was lost, much the same feelings existed as did between the Koreish and the Arab inhabitants of Basora and Kufa. In both wars the party inferior in number wished to monopolise the fruits of conquest and in both cases this provoked most lively resentment.

A.D. 732.

Hisham on his accession appointed Khalid Ibn Abdullah to be Governor of Irak. The Governor at

his accession, Amar, was deposed, cast into prison, and was tortured to hand over the arrears of revenue he had collected and murdered. This became the normal method of procedure. The Governor had, as long as he was Governor, unlimited power. All of a sudden, without a moment's warning he would be deposed and ordered to hand over all moneys belonging to the State, to his successor. This, even, if he was a righteous Governor, taking nothing out of the State revenues for himself, for the amount demanded was based on what was theoretically due, not on what was really collected. Hajjaj was better than most, but they seem all to have been bad, and the only difference between them was the degree of badness. There was no semblance of a legal trial in such cases, and probably this was just as well, for a conviction would have been either impossible or, where the Governor's influence had gone, upon no evidence at all. The reign of law, as understood in the West, had by this time, as far as Governors were concerned, ceased. Khalid was Governor for most of Hisham's reign, but he, in turn, was treated as his predecessor had been. Yusuf Ibn Omar, his successor, suddenly appeared at Kufa armed with the Caliph's order to realise the last farthing of arrears from the son of the Nazarene, by which expression he referred to Khalid's mother having been a Christian. Yusuf was only too glad to do this as the Governor before Khalid, Omar, had been his relation, and moreover he was a Northern Arab whereas Khalid was a Yemeni. Khalid after a year and a half's imprisonment was released and made a General in the wars against Byzantium, but in the next reign

Yusuf bought from the Caliph all his rights over Khalid for a large sum. On his being handed over to Yusuf for a second time he was tortured until he died.

The wars on the boundaries were intermittent, nowhere was there much ground gained. In Trans-Oxiana, Armenia and the Byzanto-Syrian frontier alike we read of raids, invasions, ambushes, retreats, plunderings, but of no serious advance. The heathen Turks, under their Khakhan, were quite a match for the Mussulmans who were now no longer the sons of the desert who had conquered at Kadesia and Nehavend. Their military colonies at Basora and Kufa had become large towns and the colonists had become town folk, impatient of warfare, though always ready for a town riot. The Governor of Irak was also Governor of Persia, and the countries to the East of Persia; on him fell the duty of appointing the local Governors and of arranging for troops for the different provinces. Some of these were unwilling conscripts from the two large cities, others the local Mussulmans, largely of non-Arab origin. And at this time we begin also to read of Arabs being sold by fellow Arabs as slaves, a sure sign that decadence in the Arab character had already set in. Another sign was the story of Yusuf, of whom mention above has been made having three slave girls put to death for answering him in three different ways as to whether they would accompany him on a journey; one for wishing to go, one for wishing to stay, and one for not knowing what to say. Of bloodshed in the early History of Islam there was plenty, bloodshed in battle, bloodshed after battle, and bloodshed as a penalty for sedition, but of gratuitous murder such

as this, we do not hear. We are getting to the time of the typical Oriental Potentate, who slays for pleasure, as Mahmud of Turkey had a girl ripped up to see what was inside her. The Arab, cruel as he was, had not any such characteristic. Yusuf and many who came after him (some of the Caliphs were about the worst), learnt this from further East.

Hisham died at Rusafa where he had built himself a Palace. This town, which was at some distance from Damascus, was much resorted to by him to escape the plague which infested the Capital and from which the pure desert air of Rusafa was a protection. With his death the Ommayad's period is coming to an end. His two successors Welid II and Yezid III reigned only a few months each. The sale of Khalid to Yusuf excited the wrath of Khalid's Yemeni kinsmen, and to this Yezid III owed the fact that he was able to overthrow and slay his disreputable cousin Welid. Yezid himself had but a short reign. He was abominated by the orthodox on account of his heretical views concerning predestination. Yusuf, the murderer of Khalid, was dismissed from his Governorship and had to flee for life. During Yusuf's reign a Moslim Ali Harith, who had deserted in Trans-Oxiana and joined himself with the heathen Turks returned, and in spite of his apostasy was pardoned. Matters and morals in Islam were changing fast.

A.D. 743.

Challenged as to the Caliphate by Merwan who had had a victorious career in the Caucasus on the Northern Frontier, Yezid offered terms which the latter accepted, making the former Viceroy of a large part of the East. Shortly after Yezid dying Merwan (after

the brief reign of Yezid's brother, Ibrahim), succeeded to the Caliphate. He was the last of the Ommayads. A.D. 744. The hostility to this family from the days of Mu'awiya had never become extinct, and with the slower extension of Islam, became greater and greater in every reign. Shiah, Abbaside, Kharijite, pious and orthodox Mussulmans, the sectaries and heretics all detested them. In a quieter period Merwan would have been probably a successful ruler. He was nicknamed the Ass, not on account of his stupidity, but for his power of physical endurance. Being supported by the Northern Arabs, the Southern Arabs were naturally his enemies. Even the Syrians, the backbone of Ommayad rule, became discontented. First and foremost of his enemies, as a matter of course, were the Kharijites. These found a leader or at least a person round whom to rally, in Mu'awiya, a descendant of a brother of Ali and again in a brother of the short reigned Caliph Ibrahim, Suleiman. This last united himself with Dahhak, the recognised Kharijite leader. Many were the fights from Damascus to Hims, from Baalbek down to Mesopotamia and much the bloodshed, for there was no sparing of life. Merwan managed to defeat these men again and again; but he had to encounter a greater storm, in which he foundered. This storm arose in Khorasan; Abu Muslim, probably of servile origin, but certainly the greatest Arab General of the age, had managed to establish himself, as the Hashimite representative at Merv. First of all he got rid of Mu'awiya, who had surrendered to him, as a possible competitor with the Abbasides and then he began his Western march. Everywhere he found adherents, more especially in

Persia and Irak. All the elements fought for him or rather against Merwan, for Shiah and Kharijites, though certainly no friends of the Abbasides, were deadly enemies of the Ommayads; and the Southern Arabs loved not a Caliph, who had surrendered into the hands of the Northerners. The old Governor of Khorasan, Nasr, over eighty years of age, described as the one loyal man of the time, was unable to stem the tide and had to fly. He died at Hamadan in Persia. Kutaiba, Abu Muslim's chief subordinate, took Kufa almost without opposition. Irak fell into the rebels' hands after a battle in which Kutaiba fell but the Hashimites were victorious. The final battle took place on the Zab where the Caliph himself met the rebels, now under the leadership of Abdullah, the uncle of the Abbaside Caliph. Merwan's army was superior in numbers but had but little heart for the cause. Badly beaten, they never rallied again. Merwan fled first to Damascus and then chased from there to Egypt, ever with the victorious rebel forces at his heels. In Egypt he was killed in a church. His head was sent to the Abbaside leader Saleh, who contemptuously threw the tongue to a cat. The Ommayads had ceased to reign. They had been conquered by a party of what, for want of a better name, may be called the Hashimites. This term, signifying the descendants of Hashim, includes both the supporters of Ali, the Shiahs and the supporters of the house of Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet. It was the latter who profited by the debâcle. For five centuries after the death of Merwan, the last Ommayad Caliph, the Abbasides were held to be the Caliphs of Islam by the greater part of the Mussulman world, and then the

Mongols came, Baghdad was sacked and the glory of the Abbasides finally departed.

The period of the Ommayads has been considered in different lights by different historians. Some writers, mainly European, consider it the golden period of Islam. Far different is the opinion of most of the Muhammadan Historians who, from the days of the Abbasides downwards, have denounced the Ommayads as a godless race and their rule a godless rule with one or two exceptions, notably Omar II. But they have this justification that there can be no doubt under their rule the laws of Islam and the precepts of the Koran were held but in minor account. Their rules of polity were much the same as those of any other great Empire, of Imperial Rome, for instance, in its early days. None of the great schools of Muhammadan law flourished in their time. The Abbasides, with a return in the letter at least, to Islamic law, had to come before these schools came into existence, and before the study of the details of the same and its practical use came into being. We have little knowledge of the private law of the time, but what we have would seem to indicate that except where there is an express rule in the Koran, the law administered was that which in the various countries conquered and in Arabia itself had force in the time of the Prophet. Concerning the land and its cultivation, indeed, we know a good deal.

When the first rush of Muhammadan invasions carried the Arabs near a large part of Western Asia and North-Eastern Africa, an immense quantity of agricultural land became the property of the conquerors. The Caliph Omar insisted on this being the

property of the State, and that the Arabs should not individually become the proprietors of any part of it. We know of the outcry that was raised mainly by tribes not belonging to the Koreish; and the inhabitants of Basora and Kufa perhaps more than any, resented any suggestions that such lands should not be parcelled out amongst themselves. The prohibition was impossible to maintain. Gradually more and more of the lands fell into the direct cultivating possession of the Arab who had settled and become domiciled outside Arabia or into their ownership, with slaves or serfs cultivating under them. In theory the Muhammadan law has never recognised the middleman or any one save the actual cultivator, and under the Ommayad régime the Arab, if wealthy, apparently cultivated by his own slaves or servants, in any case we hear but little of lands let out on leases. Revenue and not land, began to be systematically let out under the Abbasides. As regards taxes, the Muhammadans paid originally nothing, even if he held land, but what he did pay was the tithe of his income, which was compulsory whether he held land or not. But when he himself took largely to agriculture, the original rule was broken in upon and he became, just as much as the non-Muhammadan, liable to pay the land tax. This tax was calculated in three ways: the first and ordinary method was by measurement, so much for each unit of area; Omar, the second Caliph, had Irak measured for this purpose after its conquest; the second was payment by a portion of its produce; and the third was payment according to agreements made when the countries were first conquered. This chiefly took place as regards the State lands.

Such taxes were originally charged to non-Mussulmans only, but gradually Muhammadans had to pay also. Omar met with many difficulties. The Bajila, a wandering Arab tribe of Irak, who had joined the Muhammadans, were promised by him a fourth of the lands in Babylonia and then a third. They insisted on their bargain being carried out, and it was only with difficulty that Omar got them to accept a money payment in its stead. Omar's policy, indeed, was to give what we call proprietary rights in no lands at all, and when they had to be given, as at Mira, then only to non-Muslims. But this policy became more and more obsolete and by the time of Mu'awiya's death had ceased to be in force. The land tax connected itself with the property tax, which also in the Ommayad days, became general. Under this, apart from the land tax, useful animals, date plantations, fruit and vegetable gardens, mines and silver and gold became objects of taxation. And the net result was that, whereas the original taxes of the Muhammadan rules were simple in the extreme, gradually a complicated system grew up and with it, what is so much dreaded by all in the East, a large number of officials, paid as is the custom poorly, but expected to fleece not only on Government's account, but also on their own, the unfortunate tax payers.

Syria, including Palestine, Egypt and Northern Africa benefited on the whole by the change from Byzantine to Islamic rule. Readers of Edward Gibbon will remember how crushing was the taxation of these countries and the change to simpler and lighter taxation was welcome. The change to the comparative toleration under Mussulman rule

from the intolerant religious laws of new Rome was also welcome. In Irak, too, and Yemen the change from Persian, alien, Aryan rule, to that of the Arabs, the local inhabitants and fellow Semites, was also easily accepted. In Persia populated by an Aryan race, the change was not so easily effected. It was in this country that the Kharijites found their staunchest supporters and the land was never free from trouble. Beyond, the Turanian races were still outside the pale. In the older countries, Egypt, Syria and Irak, the fair commencements of Muhammadan rule were soon clouded over. There were two main causes which conspired to make the native inhabitants' position worse and worse as the years passed. First of all was the extravagance and extravagant living of the Caliphs and the great men of the Court. This, indeed, never seems to have reached such a pitch as it did later under the Abbasides. Under the Ommayads there was more gaiety but not so much senseless expenditure. And then came the civil wars and the draining of local wealth caused by the demands of the Court. And by Court is to be understood not only Damascus, but also the numerous local capitals where each Governor tried to emulate the luxury of the metropolis. A special cause in Irak for the decline of prosperity, evidenced most clearly by the fall of the land tax by about a half from the time of its conquest to that of the close of the Ommayad rule, was the neglect of the canals. In ancient times, Babylonia was one of the most fertile grain-producing countries in the world. Heredotus expressly testifies to this. But this fertility depended entirely on water and its proper distribution. Hence the canals were really Irak's life and with the

wars all this came to an end. The canals were not greatly injured by the Persian war. The conquest of Irak took a very few years, far different was the case with the civil wars that followed, more particularly the endless Kharijite revolts. By reason of them the canals everywhere became blocked, the sides fell in and no proper system for feeding them was maintained. We find Hajjaj conspicuous as doing all he could, using severity as his chief means for the purpose of their proper maintenance but ineffectually. This deterioration was gradual and it was only with the advent of the Turk, of whom the proverb says that where he goes the grass never grows, that the destruction became complete. It is to be hoped that with a wiser administration the old fertility may revive, but alas! it is much easier to destroy than to bring back to life. Damascus was the seat of luxury; dance and song flourished there and, as a consequence, the slave girl, and gradually this slave girl took largely the place of the old time Arab matron. The poems, which tell of Arabia at the time of the Prophet, make frequent mention of the virtues of the Arab mistress of the house, virtues which were very much of the same type as those of the matron of ancient Rome. Proud, chaste, brave, insisting on her husband and sons being men and not cowards, the glimpses we get of her in these poems is pleasing. But the Arab, ever greatly addicted to sensual pleasures, with the enormous influx of female slaves, gradually lost more and more his old character of a good husband. Women with the charms often of a special education in the arts of pleasing, weaned him away from his old domestic habits and in place of the free Arab woman

living in public with her husband, not dreading the light of day and of publicity, we find the Harem. It has frequently been remarked as a contributory cause to this deterioration, the necessity in consequence of the continual wars, of increasing the race. This is as it may be, but if contributory iat all, was only slightly so. It was to the sensual, not the progenerative instinct that this new phase appealed. But during the Ommayads', the process was not half complete. It was with the Abbasides that the deterioration became complete, and that in the upper circles at least the Harem stood triumphant as against the old domestic hearth.

Of buildings of the Ommayads' time not one survives. Some of the inscriptions on one of the Mosques of Damascus are stated to have come down from this period, but this seems exceedingly doubtful.

To conclude, the days of the Ommayads really carried on the great impulse given to Islam by the first Caliphs with but little of the religious zeal of those early days. Since then from time to time there have been revivals of Islam and Islamic power, but in no period does History record such great political results as those achieved by Mu'awiya and his successors.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ABBASIDES.

WITH the accession of the Abbasides we enter on quite a new page of Muhammadan history. In the East, man's life has never been of much account. We read in the early wars of Islam, of bloody fights, of bloody massacres after fights, of rivers running blood, of prisoners being given over to the sword by the thousand. Hajjaj was notorious for killing wholesale on the slightest provocation. But we read but seldom of treacherous murders, of oaths given to induce persons to put themselves in their enemies' hands and then broken. There are such cases but few in number. In the Ommayad annals we read nothing of a Court executioner, now he becomes a recognised Court Official. Gibbon says somewhere that the burning of Servetus by Calvin shocked him more than the wholesale *auto-da-fés* of the Inquisition and for myself, I am touched more deeply by the constant appearance of this executioner than by the massacres of the Ommayad days.

The Abbaside rule was one of, at least, assumed piety. The letters of the Caliphs are full of pious platitudes and theological subtleties. The most cruel of the Caliphs is often, in his speech and writing, the most religious. Quotations from the Koran are to be found frequently in what letters and orders we

have, preserved from the Ommayad days. But the constant refinements, the endless quibbling or playing on words, the nauseous mixture of religion and self-interest, these we only find in what letters or orders we get of later times.

The main fact underlying all this and the numerous changes in policy and manners of thinking and life with which we now meet, is that the Ommayad rule was essentially an Arab rule ; the rulers were Arabs, the methods of policy and thought were equally Arab. With the Abbasides we meet a rule, which was not pure Arab, which was indeed compounded of various elements of which only one was Arab and that not the most important. It is the old story of conquered Greece leading captive her conquering Rome. Persian influences, both as regards living and thinking, became paramount. The revolt of the Abbasides against the Ommayads was engineered in Khorasan, the North-East of Persia ; Persian nobles, Persian courtiers, wives and mistresses are everywhere to be found in the new Empire and Persian thought permeates the whole of Islamic theology, sometimes by way of repulsion but more generally of amalgamation. In one respect curiously enough, that of language, Arabic held more than its own. It was only with the Abbasides that Arabic became the invariable language of the official Diwan in place of the indigenous language of the various countries. The great law writers all write in Arabic ; in fact the preserved literature, theological, legal, literary, is all Arabic. But, on the other hand, Persian ideas and methods of thinking are to be met throughout. In law, their most serious rival is Roman. Indeed, here the main impress on the

whole is directly the law of Rome, as expounded in the Codes of Justinian.

The Abbasides were Hashimites of the family of Muhammad but not descended from the Prophet himself. They were united through Fatima to the Alides (the direct descendants), by a common hatred to the godless Ommayads. These Alides had been largely instrumental everywhere in raising up rebellions against the Ommayad rule. In the turbulent Cities of Irak, Basora and Kufa they always found a hearing and support, and when the final outburst came, they, equally with the Abbasides, rose against the common enemy. But this alliance, the only bond of which was a common hatred, could not survive the overthrow of this enemy. Apart from dynastic reasons, the doctrines of the Alides, as to whom the head of Islam should be, which until the fatal day of Kerbala had only been half defined, had now developed so as to be on many points contradictory to the Sunni tradition, to which most of the Arab theologians adhered. By the time the Ommayad dynasty had come to an end, both Sunni and Shiah theology had become pretty well fixed, much as they are at the present day. The foundation of Sunnism was a correct formalism and an objection to theological speculation; with the Shiahs speculation led them into all sorts of positions diametrically opposite to orthodox Muhammadanism, and so we find the Shiahs treated as a proscribed sect equally under the Abbaside as under the Ommayad rule.

The first Abbaside Caliph was Abu'l Abbas belonging to the senior living line of the direct descendants of Abbas. His mother was of noble birth; his brother, Abu Jafar, who was older, was the

son of a slave girl. Abu'l Abbas's reign was short, and as we will see it was this brother Abu Jafar who really placed the Abbaside dynasty on a firm foundation.

Abu'l Abbas concealed himself in Kufa when the fighting between Merwan and Abu Muslim took place, and continued to do so till some months after the Hashimite soldiery had actually taken possession of that town. He was advised by Abu Salma, a strong supporter of the Hashimites, not to show himself so long as an Ommayad General held Wasit, the strong fortress town built in the previous century as a curb on the two turbulent cities of Kufa and Basora. But the folk at Kufa, impetuous and fickle as ever, were impatient of delay and insisted on his appearing as Caliph amongst them, and so first taking possession of the Palace he proceeded on horse-back to the Great Mosque and there delivered an address. In this after denunciations of the Ommayads and praise of the Kufans, he ended by declaring he would root out all opposition for he was the Great Revenger and his name was As Suffah, "the shedder of blood". As such he has come down in history. No longer is it the blood of enemies to Islam whose blood pours out but the purest blood of Islam itself. First of all it was the turn of the Ommayads. These were everywhere proscribed and hunted down. Treachery was employed when possible to inveigle them to their doom. An amnesty was proclaimed and the various members of the family were invited by the Caliph's uncle in Palestine to a commemoration feast. During the banquet, the attendants fell on the unsuspecting guests, who were all put to death. A carpet was

put over the slain and the uncle continued his feast. We are far from Mecca and Medina now and well on our way to the Oriental tyrant of legend and history. We do not read of the Uliema approving, but later on they have, with honourable exceptions, been found to approve of the most tyrannical acts of the time-being master. One Ommayad of note alone escaped, Abdur Rahman, and he, as will be stated hereafter, founded the Spanish Caliphate. The first secession in Islam followed the death of Othman ; a greater schism was caused by Kerbala; but the most lasting political schism was that caused by Abdur Rahman becoming the Muhammadan ruler of Spain.

The outward unity of Islam was a thing of the past. The hatred towards the deposed dynasty was not confined to the living. The tombs of the dead Caliphs, Omar II and Mu'awiya's excepted, were desecrated and their ashes cast to the winds. Hisham's skeleton was found intact and it was scourged, hung up for a while and then burnt. Such outrages horrified even supporters of the new Rulers, and it was the occasion of revolts both in Syria and Mesopotamia. The former was the most serious, for the Syrians at last realised that their position, not only their supremacy, was at stake. It was finally suppressed and with horrible slaughter. Damascus lost its primacy and the Koreish, who were the backbone of the Syrians, lost their place in the Muhammadan community for ever.

In Mesopotamia, Basora, as usual, took a leading part in the strife, and there the old North and South enmity added an extra amount of misery to the

citizens. The struggle only really came to an end with the surrender of Wasit. This ended by the Ommayad General Ibn Hobaira capitulating on a promise by Abu Jafar, the Caliph's brother, that his life would be spared. The Caliph disregarded this promise, and had him and many of his fellow officers treacherously slain at an interview. It is related that the Yemenite officers were spared presumably because it was hoped they would favour the Abbaside power in future.

It was not only his enemies that As Suffah destroyed either openly or by treachery, it was also his friends whom he suspected; amongst these the most prominent was Abu Salma, who had been mainly instrumental in making him Caliph. He also desired to do away with Abu Muslim, the great general who had won the Abbaside victories for him, and who was acting in Khorasan as if he were an independent ruler. But he found him toc strong. The opportunity only came in the next reign.

It is not a matter of surprise that, in these circumstances, there was disorder everywhere, especially on the borders of the Empire. Sind, Khorasan and Oman never acknowledged his authority. It was while the repression of these disorders was going on that As Suffah died. His reign was only two years in duration, but marked the great change from Arab rule to the hybrid rule of which I have spoken. He disliked residing in Kufa naturally enough as it was ever the headquarter of revolt, and built himself a palace and fortress a little away at Al-Anbar which he named Al-Hashmiyeh. It was there, A.D. 754, he died: quite a young man not more, but accounts differ, than about 35. It was his successor Abu Jafar

who really brought the Empire with Spain and a large part of Northern Africa cut out, back to unity.

The new Caliph was, at the time of his brother's death, on a pilgrimage to Mecca. With him had gone Abu Muslim whose retinue and surroundings surpassed Abu Jafar's in pomp and grandeur although the latter was chief of the pilgrimage. The new ruler assumed the name of Al Mansur (the victorious), and it is by this name that he is known in history. As soon as he learnt of his brother's death, he returned to Kufa and there formally inaugurated his reign by leading at prayers in the Great Mosque. His first task was to procure the murder of Abu Muslim. This great General, worthy to be ranked with the early Arab Generals of the days of Abu Bakr and Omar, was ruling as a practically independent chief in Khorasan. But before having him murdered, the Caliph had use for him in Syria where he was needed to defeat a rival candidate for the Caliphate, Al Mansur's uncle, Abdullah. This Abdullah had in his army 17,000 Khorasanis and to these Abu Muslim was the hero. Abdullah feared that they would desert him and when they began actually to do so, is said to have put all of them that remained, to death. Abu Muslim was successful and Abdullah was forced to submit, but was allowed to live. The Caliph contented himself with putting his uncle (one of the most blood-thirsty in an age of blood-thirsty persons) into captivity. Abu Muslim's campaign had been in the lands adjacent to Syria far away from his stronghold Khorasan. To this Province he now wished to return, but the Caliph seut message after message for an interview, and so he

proceeded to the Court at Al Madain and to his fate. At an interview with the Caliph the latter reproached him with various offences, imaginary or real, and having first, through cajolery, disarmed him, clapped his hands, on which five armed men rushed in and cut him to pieces. After Abu Muslim's death, Al Mansur was able to declare that he was really the ruler of Islam. This Caliph had not only members of the house of Abbas as possible rivals. Theoretically the chief rival claimants were the descendants of Ali. Only an Arab can really decide whether in the Arabs' estimation, the descendants of an uncle have prior claims to a private estate than the descendants of a daughter's son, and if this be true of a private estate, much more can they only decide in the case when the Caliphate was the object of pursuit. On the one side there is the strong feeling, world-wide amongst people of various stages of culture, that agnatic relations are to be preferred to those claiming through a woman. On the other hand, the Alides were the descendants of Muhammad himself whereas the Abbasides could not claim any right directly springing from Muhammad, but only from his grandfather Al Mutalleb, and it may be added that if this were a good claim, the Ommayads were also his descendants. But in addition to the claim of descent, the Alides now put forward a new claim which appealed powerfully to many of the mystics of Islam and to the Persians in particular, that there was a special divine prestige in the family of Ali or rather in the head for the time being of the family, who as Imam held, by divine right, supreme authority over the Muhammadan World. From this to the belief in the Imam, if not divine, at least semi-divine, is

but a small step. The trouble with the Alide's claims was that its chief supporters were largely reunited from the populations which had always been noted for their fickleness and instability. The head of the family at the time was Abdullah, whom Al Mansur had thrown in prison. The Alides had always up to now had their headquarters in Arabia, in Mecca or Medina, unlike the Ommayads and Abbasides who had long abandoned the sacred cities. They, as might be expected, held much more tenaciously to the religious side of Islam, and to the localities sanctified by the Prophet, than did the Caliphs, whether Ommayad or Abbaside. The sons of Abdullah, Muhammad and Ibrahim, escaped when their father was seized, and led a wandering life at one time reaching Sind and again returning through Irak to Medina. The Caliph demanded from the imprisoned Abdullah and other of his relatives that the sons should be surrendered. When he could not lay hold of them, several of the relatives were put to death; one at least in a most cruel fashion. The head of one of the murdered men was sent to Khorasan, and it was given out that it was the head of Muhammad, one of Abdullah's sons. This Muhammad finding himself pursued everywhere broke out into rebellion at Medina where he was secure of support. Ibrahim at the same time was stirring up the fickle Basora folk. The Caliph was alarmed. It is never safe to predict, as might be seen in the early history of the Abbasides, how far, with an Asiatic population, a religious revolt may spread. First of all, characteristically, he entered into a correspondence with Muhammad. Mutual recriminations naturally appeared in the letters. When Al Mansur offered a

pardon, Muhammad replied in his turn by offering him the same on his resignation of the Caliphate. In a long letter reproduced by Weil, the Caliph argued at length on descent through a female being inferior to descent through a male. At last he determined to resort to force and accordingly sent troops under his nephew Isa, the heir-apparent (nominated as such by As Suffah according to the prevalent custom of a Caliph naming his two successors) to put down the rebellion. It is said that the Caliph who had already determined that his son and not Isa should be his successor characteristically remarked he cared not which of the two, Isa or Muhammad, got the better. Muhammad followed the Prophet's example by building a trench round Medina. But the days of such primitive warfare were at an end. Not for nothing had the Arabs fought with the Byzantines for more than a century and Medina did not contain at the time the flower of the Arab race as it did at the Prophet's. Forced to fight, he went to battle wearing the Prophet's sword. But it availed him nothing. Slain, his head was cut off and paraded at Kufa and other cities. So fell the first of the brothers.

The other, Ibrahim, now raised a revolt at Basora itself, and seized the city where the multitude vehemently took up his cause. Fars, Al Ahwaz and Wasit fell into his hands. He then marched on to Kufa. The Caliph, who was at the time busy building his new capital at Baghdad, was greatly alarmed. His troops were largely far away on the border lands. Only a small part were with him. But gradually reinforcements came and then a decisive battle was fought some fifty miles from

Kufa. At first the troops of the Caliph, under the same Isa that I have mentioned above, gave way, and it seemed that the Alides would win the day, but Ibrahim being hit by an arrow was killed and his army fled. The trouble from the descendants of Ali and their cause was extinguished for the time being.

Another rising of an extraordinary nature occurred early in this Caliph's reign. A sect known as the Rawendiyeh, so-called from the town where it started, the first of many a Persian sect within Islam with the same tendency, believing in the transmigration of souls and the divine immanence, came to the Court and insisted on the Caliph being an incarnation of the deity. Travellers in Persia tell us that when the incarnation of Christ is mentioned to a Persian mystic he sees nothing particularly wonderful; he says, often, the deity has been incarnate in man. This blasphemy outraged the Caliph as being a direct negation of the fundamental beliefs of Islam. On his imprisoning some of the leaders, others burst open the prison and assailed the Caliph, whom they no longer considered as the deity incarnate. Fortunately, assistance came and the Caliph escaped; the Rawendiyehs were caught within the city walls (Baghdad had by this time been built) and were exterminated.

I have just mentioned Baghdad. The building of this city was the main work of this reign. The name is old Persian; its meaning "God given". Situate on the Tigris further east than the two Arab cities Kufa and Basora, its position shows it to be a step from Arabia towards Persia; in other words, the pure Arab Empire had gone and with it the pure Arab capital or capitals. But Islam was not

yet completely Persianised, and Baghdad, in accordance with its geographical position is historically a half-way house between Arabia and Persia. Originally it was built entirely on the western side; the eastern side was of later date. First of all Mansur intended it solely as a Palace and Fort, but speedily it grew into a great city in which many other palaces, only less than the Central Palace, sprang up. In building Baghdad, the Caliph's right hand was Khalid, the Barmecide. This family, which for a number of years held the chief position in the State, probably derived its name from an old Persian word, which was a title given to the Chief Priest of a fire-temple. Certain it is that Barmek, the reputed father of Caliph, was a Persian of Balkh, and that his mother was also a Persian, though a story disbelieved by Weil makes his real father the brother of Ketaba, an Arab Governor of Khorasan in the days of the Caliph Welid. However this may be, his was the first non-Arab family to rise to the highest position save that of Caliph in the State. His sons succeeded him and until the tragic termination of the family in the days of Harun Al Rashid the influence of the Barmecides was practically unlimited. In order to build Baghdad, the Caliph had recourse for building materials to Al Madain, the old Persian capital. The story is told how Khalid remonstrated against the destruction of the Iwan, the Persian Monarch's Palace, where Ali had had his place of prayer, and of the Caliph's replying that it was on account of his being a Persian and desiring to save a piece of old Persia that Khalid objected. But the building turned out to be too firmly built for Mansur's engineers to destroy, and so the arches stand even to this day. But a few years

ago, they saw General Townshend's battle with the Turks and they seem likely to stand for many a year to come.

As to external matters, war went on by fits and starts with the Byzantine Empire with no very definite results. There were constant border raids, but serious headway was made by neither the Byzantine nor the Islamic power. Far different is the story of Spain. I have already stated that Abdur Rahman (one of the Ommayads) had escaped from the massacres organized by As Suffah. From Palestine to Egypt, from Egypt to Africa and then across the sea to Spain, he fled; in each case narrowly escaping from capture or death. At Cordova, he was received by the Spanish Muhammadans with joy. To them he represented the Yemenites, the South Arabians, whereas the Abbasides were the sons of Modar. After once being enthroned at Cordova, no serious attempt was ever made by the Abbasides to dethrone him, and from that date there was a definite schism in Islam. Not like that of the Shiahs and Sunnis in which the Shiahs were either rebellious or submissive whatever might be their ideas to the Baghdad Caliph, but a schism in which a rival Caliph claimed the obedience of the races subject to him as their spiritual as well as temporal chief. The Spanish Caliphs reigned in Spain for seven hundred years. The same schism has been continued by the Ruler of Morocco by claiming to be the spiritual head of a large part of the population of North Africa.

A.D. 755.

Africa gave trouble, though it was finally made subject to Abbaside rule. There was hard fighting, Kairwen was taken and retaken and Aghlab, the progenitor of a dynasty which ruled over Africa for

many a year, was slain in a fight near Tunis, where his grave was reverenced as that of a martyr. The time of African independence had not yet come. The Arab still lorded it over the Berber.

Mansur died on the way to Mecca, while performing the annual pilgrimage. This he did on various occasions, being particular in performing this duty as often as he could. His death took place three miles from Mecca and he was buried there but where, no one knows. It is typical of the disturbed times that a hundred graves were dug for him, but that he was buried in none of them but in another unknown grave, it being feared that if his tomb were known, his enemies might be tempted to desecrate it. Indeed, he and his race had plenty of them. On the one hand, the Shiahs who considered the descendants of Abbas as hardly better than those of Sufian, and then the adherents of these latter, the late Ommayad dynasty, and particularly the Syrians who had seen their power depart from them. Add to these Kharijites and one can easily understand how the Caliphate was surrounded by enemies and how shadowy was the boasted unity of Islam. Another century and this unity will receive a more serious shock by the various provinces becoming independent, and the Caliph regards Irak as the only province left to him, being in the hands of his Turkish bodyguard. But at the time of Mansur's death, the Empire was still compact and firm and outwardly its universality was unchallenged save in the West where there was already a rival Caliph at Cordova.

A.D. 775.

Mansur himself was the real prime-mover next to Abu Muslim in the revolution, which led to the

overthrow of the Ommayads and the accession of the Abbasides. As such he was emphatically a strong man, perhaps with one or two doubtful exceptions, the strongest of the line. He was also essentially a statesman; the State under him finally adopted the policy, which, in name at least, guided its actions for the coming centuries. He was not a sensualist, such as most of those who preceded and followed him, and as to cruelty, though cruel especially in State matters, he does not stand worse than the majority of the Abbaside Caliphs and was, indeed, better than several. With him the fight between Arab and non-Arab was really finally decided and that in favour of the latter.

Mehdi succeeded his father. His first care was to change the order of succession. Isa, his cousin, had been nominated by As Suffah as the second in succession. Mansur forced him to postpone his claim to that of Mehdi. The latter now desired to force him to renounce his claim altogether. For a long time Isa resisted and staying at Rabbah, outside Kufa, which he only visited on Fridays and Feast days, seems to have been able to keep himself at a distance from the Court. But at last Mehdi sent an armed force of a thousand men to Rabbah and their leader made the unfortunate Isa accompany him to Baghdad. There under threats of death, if he refused, and a handsome pension if he accepted, Isa yielded. His doing so was looked on with displeasure by the Arabs, who saw in it an instance of the old virtue of their race bravery changing to the Oriental's cowardice.

Mehdi inherited vast treasures from his father. He was thus able without fresh taxation to spend

royally. Most of his expenditure seems to have been wise; roads, wells and inns were all put in good order, and he instituted the rite of the holy carpet in its present form. Up to his time at the yearly pilgrimage, carpet had been placed upon carpet till the Kaaba threatened to subside under the weight. Now each year as a fresh carpet is placed on the holy building, the carpet of the last year is removed, a desirable improvement. His generosity to poets, artists and scientists is also highly praised by the historians.

As to his reign the chief events were the foreign wars and the suppression of heresies and consequent civil wars. The first need not detain us long. In the west there were raids and counter-raids in Asia Minor. The Byzantine Empire was threatened with internal troubles and did not resist as strenuously as it would otherwise have done. The Muhammadan army's most striking success was when a large force nominally commanded by the Caliph's second son, Harun, marched as far as the Bosphorus ravaging wherever it went, and was allowed to return by treaty retaining alike its booty and prisoners, the Empress Irene also agreeing to pay a yearly tribute. But Mehdi's reign is chiefly notable for another reason. Previous to his reign, Caliphs had been deposed nominally for disobeying the orders of the Koran, for drinking wine even and such depositions were justified by Fatwas from the Uliemas who have, as I have before said, from the earliest days of Islam been noted as a body for their willingness to cringe to authority. But Islam on the whole was a very tolerant creed. As regards the Kharijites even, it was rather these latter who

would not leave the orthodox alone than the orthodox who molested the Kharijites. But with this reign we have the beginning of something like the Inquisition, of a regular persecution of the heretic as opposed to the non-Muhammadan, who, provided he paid tribute, if he belonged to the people of the book, was not troubled save by the petty pin pricks sanctioned in the days of Omar and remittently practised. As to those who were not of the book, whom Islam is theoretically bound to force into the true religion, their treatment has ever varied according to circumstances. Of these heretics, Zindik is the general name, though commonly it is used of Manicheans alone. These followers of Manes, the founder of the sect, are accounted by some as Muhammadans, by some as Christians, but it was rather their social doctrines, their opposition to all civil authority and constituting authorities of their own that has made them to be persecuted alike in Muhammadan and Christian States. One grim story is told of one of Mehdi's ministers. A courtier wishing to obtain his office, informed the Caliph that the minister's son was a Zindik. On being brought before the Caliph, the son admitted his ignorance of the Koran, whereon the Caliph held the guilt proved and had him beheaded. This systematic persecution, started by Mehdi, came to stay and as long as the Caliphs had power, remained an integral part of their policy. Most of the sects, I may say, away from the Manicheans, were marked by the same characteristics that of being a State in themselves, communism of property and often also of women.

In this reign in Khorasan, a heresy known to the English-reading world by Moore's poem, Lalla Rookh,

broke out. Its head, the veiled Prophet of Khorasan, taught that the Deity had resided in various men, amongst whom were Adam, Abu Muslim and lastly himself. For four years this Prophet maintained himself against the Caliph's troops, and when finally driven into a fort either poisoned himself or set fire to the palace and called on his wives and all others who wished to follow him to heaven to imitate his example. His strength lay probably in the fact that the Khorasanis had never forgotten the fate of Abu Muslim and were ever ready to rise against his murderers, the Abbasides.

Mehdi married a slave girl, Kheisuran, the mother of his two children, who acquired a great influence over him, and through him over the State. She wished her younger son, Harun, to be his successor and not the elder Hadi and persuaded her husband to consent to it. Hadi, who learnt of the intrigue, refused to leave his troops in Yarjan and came to the Court, and so Mehdi led an army to coerce him. But on the way he died, commonly reported to be poisoned, but certainly not a natural death, his son Hadi succeeded, Harun recognising his superior title; but his reign lasted only a couple of years. Hadi wished his son, a young boy, to be his successor and persisted in spite of all his best advisers' remonstrances. These told him that the people would never tolerate a minor as Caliph. His reign, however, came to an untimely end, before he was able to carry out his design, for he had mortally offended his mother, who in Mehdi's time had been all powerful, by ordering her to refrain from interfering with State matters. As to how he died accounts vary, but the most generally

A.D. 785.

accepted is that he was smothered by his mother's slaves in the middle of the night in his harem, and his youthful son Jafar forced then and there to recognise Harun as the lawful Caliph. The new Caliph Harun, surnamed Al Rashid (the just), became Caliph at the age of 25 and reigned for twenty-three years. His name is a household word in the west and the east alike. The reason for this is mainly that he is the Caliph of the Arabian Nights, that accumulation of stories, which has delighted the poor and the rich alike both in Europe and Asia. His more solid fame rests on his encouragement of learning and his having made Baghdad one of the most flourishing cities in the World. In Muhammadan histories the most prominent incident of his reign is his treatment of the Barmecides. This family had risen to the foremost place in the Caliph's Court, though it was probably entirely Persian, certainly mainly so. It was, perhaps, the most conspicuous case of a new believer, non-Arab family becoming, not only secretly but openly, the dominant power in the State. The father Yahya was, when Harun Al Rashid ascended the throne, an old man. He had two sons, Fazl and Jafar. Both seemed to have exercised boundless influence over Harun and so over the whole State. The younger was nominated Vazir and was the Caliph's constant attendant. Their generosity was boundless, their virtues talk of the day. On a sudden, as is only too common in the East, the whole family came down with a crash. Why, is even now not perfectly clear and if not now never will be, but the older authorities, and Weil (who has discussed the matter in many pages) agree, that it was Jafar's marriage

A.D. 786.

with Abbasa, the Caliph's sister, which caused their downfall. The Caliph was particularly fond of this sister, so fond that scandal arose as to their relations. Anyhow, when she married Jafar, the story runs that the understanding, insisted on by the Caliph, was that the relation of husband and wife should only be purely nominal. Notwithstanding this, a child was born, and, in spite of attempts to hide the fact, the Caliph came to learn of its birth from a gossiping slave. The child had been sent to Mecca. Harun, on his pilgrimage to Mecca, saw the child, and on being assured of its likeness to Jafar, determined on the ruin not of him only but of the whole family. On his return to Baghdad, dissembling, he ordered for them fresh honours, but in the dead of night when Jafar was with him, he suddenly ordered him to be seized and beheaded. Sir W. Muir suggests that Jafar was not with him but that a eunuch was sent to murder him but the common story is otherwise. The rest of the family were thrown into prison, their properties seized and their power finally fell from them. Both father and brother died in prison before Harun's death; a striking story of the instability of fortune.

Harun Al Rashid's wars were mainly with the Greeks on the northern frontier. Besides inroads by Byzantine forces into upper Syria there were also the Khazars against whom he had to defend the Armenian border. When hostilities first began, the Empress Irene reigned at Constantinople, and there were internal dissensions which prevented a vigorous prosecution of the war on the Greek side. The consequence was that Irene was forced into paying tribute to obtain a four-year truce. After her,

Nicephorus became Emperor. On his accession, he wrote to Harun Al Rashid thus—"From Nicephorus, King of the Greeks, to Harun, King of the Arabs. Irene hath parted with the castle and contented herself with the pawn. She had paid thee moneys the double of which thou shouldst have paid to her. It was a woman's weakness. Wherefore return what thou hast taken or the sword shall decide." The letter was obviously intended to provoke the Caliph and it, indeed, did. His answer written on the back of Nicephorus' letter ran thus—"From Harun, Commander of the Faithful, to Nicephorus, dog of the Greeks. I have read thy letter, son of an unbelieving mother. The answer is for thine eye to see, not for thine ear to hear." And he was as good as his word. A great part of Asia Minor was over-run, enormous booty, including many human beings carried off and a large part of the country turned into a desert. The Greeks retaliated in their turn and the result was much trouble and distress along the whole of the border lands, but neither side got any increase of their permanent territory. What had been the boundary at Omar's death was still pretty much the boundary at the death of Harun Al Rashid. Syria was a part of the Caliphate, Asia Minor of the Eastern Roman Empire. Two centuries more had to elapse before an eastern race, not the Arab but a non-Semitic Turanian race, the Seljuks, took Asia Minor or the largest part of it from Byzantium. Perhaps the most important event in these wars was that Tarsus at the bend was highly fortified as the frontier bulwark of Islam. In this reign we read for the first time of a Turk in high command. As in Europe, at the same time when Charlemagne was

seemingly all-powerful in the West, we read of the Northmen, who within a half century from his death, tear his empire to pieces, so we now begin to read of Turks, whom less than a century will substitute Turkish for Arab rule and put an end in reality to the Arab Caliphate. The ninth century of the Christian era brings in alike the rise of the Northmen in the west and the Turks in the east. These wars were an excuse to the Caliph to leave Baghdad for Ar-Rakka, a fortress in Northern Syria. This he did eight or nine years after his accession, and though his name is indissolubly bound up with the city on the Tigris, a great, if not the greater, part of his reign was spent elsewhere. In this reign finally Spain fell away. It had never, in fact, since Abdur Rahman the Ommayad had been declared the Caliph of Spain, any dependence on Baghdad; but now the pretence even of subordination ended. Baghdad was still the Muhammadan centre indeed. The time had not come for either Cordova or Bokhara to vie with it; but still the former city, at least, was rapidly working its way to be the foremost and the most enlightened city of Islam, Bokhara's time was later.

Africa, excepting Egypt, also in this reign ceased to be an effective part of the Caliphate. The Idrisides at Tangier had never been but nominally subject to the Abbasides, and the Aghlabides at Kairwen (which even now assumed importance as a sacred city, an importance which it still holds for the Muhammadans of the West) beyond a nominal admission of suzerainty, were in no ways subject to Baghdad. Harun, indeed, sent Hurthuma to reduce Africa to obedience. But he found, as so many others have found, that he could win victories over but not subdue, this vast

continent. To Africa I shall revert after closing my account of the Arab Caliphate at Baghdad. The usual number of rebellions and outbreaks occasioned either by the oppressions of the local authorities or the unruliness of the sects and their disinclination to regular rule, occurred in this reign. We read as a matter of course of Kharijite revolts; these were of frequent occurrence; also tumults caused by the Alides. More important was a revolt in the country beyond the Oxus. The story is that a wealthy lady of Samarkand being told that the easiest way to divorce her husband, who had long been absent, was to abjure Islam did so, and thereupon married a second husband, himself a Muhammadan, by name Rafi Ibn Leith. The first husband complained and the Caliph ordered the new husband to divorce the lady, to be paraded on a donkey and cast into prison. He, however, escaped, raised a force and seized all the country beyond the Oxus. The story is a curious one and probably untrue. The real cause of the revolt was the oppressive Government of the ruler, Ali Ibn Isa. The Caliph recognised this. He appointed Hurthuma, lately returned from Africa, to be Governor, and the latter seized Ali's person and his amazing wealth. Fifteen hundred camels were necessary to carry it to Ar-Rakka. But this step was not sufficient to bring the rebellion to an end. The Caliph found it necessary himself to take the field and it was on this expedition that he died. Just before his death the brother of Rafi was brought a prisoner into his presence. The dying Caliph ordered "If I had no breath but to say a single word, it would be slay him," and so he was slain in his presence.

A.D. 809.

Harun, like his predecessors, had attempted to settle the succession in his own way. Of his sons, the eldest, known in history as Mamun, was the son of a slave girl; Amin, the second, was of pure Arab blood on both sides; and there were others. To Amin he bequeathed the Caliphate; Mamun, whom he named as Caliph after Amin, was to be Governor of Khorasan. The Wills, with these instructions on them, were hung up at Mecca. They were of little use, however. "The sword will decide" were the words of one of the earliest Arab leaders and so it was in this case. Fortunate it was for Mamun that he was with his father at Tus on his way to Khorasan, when the latter died. He was thus beyond Amin's clutches into which if he had fallen, his end would have been certain. In the East, two Kings cannot sit on one blanket and it has ever been a King or a grave.

Harun was courted by Charlemagne, who sent him an embassy and many gifts. The Frank's chief request was with regard to the pilgrimage by the Christians to Palestine. To this the Caliph lent a favourable ear. Persecution of them, when so making a pilgrimage, began two centuries later. The hardships of the way in these days were chiefly the result of the pilgrimage itself.

Baghdad was now beginning its brilliant career not only as a great City, for so it had been from Mansur's day, but as the centre of culture. Poets abounded; sciences were studied; more important for the world were the founding of a great school of Muhammadan Jurisprudence and the translations of Aristotle into Arabic. This school laid down expositions of Islamic law which are in full force to this day; both the religion of a modern Muhammadan

and the rules of his enjoyment of his worldly property depend on what the Masters wrote in Baghdad and Basora more than a thousand years ago; and it was through the Arabic translations that the Latin literature arose, which kept alive the old Greek learning at a time, when otherwise the whole of Europe was plunged into utter darkness as far as science or philosophy was concerned.

With the death of Harun, the Empire was thrown into the vortex of a disputed succession. Both the claimants were young and both were entirely under the control of their chief Ministers; both of these bore the name of Fazl; the Minister of Mamun being Fazl Abi Sahl and the Minister of Amin, Fazl Abi Rabia. The strife was really between the Arab and Persian elements. With the victory of the latter, the Arab ceased to be the ruling spirit in Muhammadan World. As usual, first of all there were attempts at a compromise, which failed. Then Amin took the decisive step of declaring Mamun excluded from the succession and tearing up the two copies of the Will of his father, hung up at Mecca. It was now war to the death. The hero of the war was Tahir. Steadily advancing from north-east to south-west down by Rei and Holwan, he pressed Amin's soldiers everywhere back. The latter, indeed, had but little inclination to fight and their commanders were not only incapable but hated by the mass of the soldiery. One of his officers, Hosein, indeed, suddenly arrived at Baghdad, and, on being summoned by the Caliph to come to him at once, answered that he was neither a jester nor a buffoon either and so would visit him next morning. The next day he managed to arrest the Caliph and his

mother, but after a fight was driven out. He was thereafter pardoned by the Caliph, put in charge of troops to fight against Mamun, deserted and was finally put to death at the Caliph's orders. Such a state of affairs did not bode well for Amin's affairs. The man himself was a poor sensualist, as might have been judged from the message sent him by Hosein, and there seems to have been no great energy on the part of his supporters. Finally Baghdad remained alone to him and it was besieged till famine made further defence impossible. To add to the troubles of hunger, Tahir gradually made headway in various parts of the town. Street fighting was constant. At last Tahir, reinforced by Hurthuma, another of the great Abbaside generals, stormed what remained. The Caliph was drinking and conversing. He was persuaded to surrender, but this he could only agree to do provided it was to Hurthuma. It seems this was arranged, but when crossing in a boat with the latter, it was upset. Hurthuma escaped, Amin was drowned.

Mamun did not come at once to Baghdad. He had strong Shi-ite inclinations and his surroundings were very ante-Arab. On the other hand, Baghdad was the centre of the Arab party and the Arabs. First of all he sent his Vazir's brother Hasan Abi Sahl to be Viceroy. This meant the supersession of Tahir, who had really won the Empire for him, and a challenge to the orthodox party. Rebel after rebel sprung up. One, Nasr, for years had the upperhand in the border lands of Asia Minor, Tahir doing nothing to oppose him; another, Abu Saraza, set himself up at Kufa as the Caliph, claiming to be a descendant of Ali. Things went well with him

till Mamun had resource to Hurthuma. Unlike Tahir, Hurthuma acted vigorously and had not much trouble in putting the rebellion down. The leader was seized passing the Tigris and beheaded. One unfortunate result of this rebellion was trouble at Mecca where the Kaaba's golden linings and treasures were plundered, and it is stated that Othman's original Koran, the source of our present text, was burnt, which was a great disaster. Hurthuma met the not-uncommon fate the Abbasides provided for their too successful generals. He went to Merv, where Mamun was staying, in order to point out to him the importance of leaving Khorasan and appearing in Baghdad. Fazl Abi Sahl, who feared his influence, persuaded the Caliph that he was a potential rebel and so he was seized on his way to the Caliph, thrown in prison where he died, executed the common story goes, by the Vazir's orders. His career had been devoted to the Abbasides. Like Abu Muslim, he was the chief instrument of the military success of Mamun and his predecessors. He was, like Abu Muslim, too, in his death.

Hurthuma's death caused much trouble in Baghdad. Hasan, the Governor, was abused as a Magian and the son of a Magian and driven out. Anarchy ensued and it was months before things settled down, and they had hardly done so when a new act of Mamun caused a fresh outburst.

A.D. 817.

Mamun had always strong Shi-ite tendencies, not unnaturally, seeing that his mother was a Persian slave girl, and his bringing-up was almost entirely amongst Persians. Whether persuaded by his Vazir or not, he came to the conclusion that the best way of settling the secular enmity between

Abbaside and Alide, was to name his successor one of the latter and accordingly having summoned Ali known as Ar Riza (the well pleasing) to Merv he declared him, a man 22 years older than himself, as his successor. The result might have been foreseen. The whole of the orthodox party was up in arms. A new Caliph was found in Baghdad in the person of Ibrahim, the son of Mehdi, the former Caliph, by an African slave girl. Hasan was forced to retire to Wasit. Kufa declined to receive him, though a Shi-ite city it refused him entrance, as being the representative not of the Alide Ar Riza but of the Abbaside Mamun. The latter now found that he could no longer delay coming to Baghdad. Ar Riza told him himself that he had made a mistake and that with Tahir alienated, he would have to take strong measures if the Empire was not to go to pieces. One of his first steps was to get his Vazir Fazl Abi Sahl out of the way. This man was supposed to be the cause of Mamun's strange step in declaring Ar Riza heir-apparent. He was found murdered in his bath at Sarakhs, and though the Caliph denied all complicity, the result was too favourable to him for most people not to believe him to be author, and then, as his luck would have it, Ar Riza died. Poisoned, said a censorious world. Whether so or not, the two deaths were most opportune. After them the Caliph still had trouble, owing to his religious views but no more rebellions. The black flag of the Abbasides floated again; during the Ar Riza episode the green flag of the Alides had been at the Caliph's orders, the official standard. Ibrahim collapsed almost at once. For years he was in hiding; when discovered he was in woman's dress. In the same he was taken

to Mamun; the latter was about to be married to Buran, the daughter of Hasan Abi Sahl; the bride interceded for Ibrahim, and the Caliph was moved to compassion and forgiveness. Ibrahim lived: an exception to the fate of those who had unsuccessfully aimed at the Caliphate. Mamun entered Baghdad in August 819. Of punishment to the rebels there was none. Tahir was for a short time Governor but found it wiser to return to the Governorship of the East. There after two years he died, poisoned (said the world again), at the Caliph's instigation. He was by far the most famous General of his generation. From him descended the Tahirides, who, on the break up of the Arab Empire which was rapidly approaching, became one of the dynasties which succeeded to the north-eastern part of this Empire. There were the usual frontier wars on the borders of Asia Minor; razzias rather than wars. More important were the affairs in Egypt; this had again to be subdued by the Caliph's lieutenants. North Africa had finally separated from the Empire, but still Egypt remained lingering on; its final disconnection was a number of years later, though from now its connection with Baghdad was very slight.

Mamun was not orthodox; he adopted the views of the Mutazalites, a school whose teachings were an attempt to reconcile Islamic theology with natural reason, in some respects not very different from the English deists at the beginning of the eighteenth century. But one thing these rationalists had not learnt and that was tolerance. With the Ommayads this had been the rule; with the Abbasides the exception; Zindiqs (heretics) ever since Mehdi's day had had a bad time, and the favourite method to get

rid of a political opponent was to accuse him of heresy. But in the case of Mamun, this was not so. Those that he persecuted on this score were not the politically dangerous. The opinion that the Koran had been in existence from all eternity was strongly held by the orthodox school; to teach this was in Mamun's and his Ministers' opinion, a crime, and so some of the greatest Muhammadan teachers amongst them, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, the founder of one of the four great Muhammadan schools of law, found to his cost; he was imprisoned and probably would have been put to death had not the death of Mamun supervened. First of all, milder measures had been tried against him and other leaders of Muhammadan thought to make them accept Mutazalites' doctrine; many yielded, but others (Ibn Hanbal amongst them) steadily held out. The more incomprehensible many a theological doctrine is, the oftener one finds upholders whom not torture, nor death itself, can bend. Mamun died at Tarsus, the result we read of having bathed in an icy cold stream, when over heated (A.D. 833). His reign was perhaps the most brilliant of all those of the Abbasides, less stained with cruelty, most adorned by learning and the prosperity of the peoples subject to the Caliphate. At Baghdad, there was quite an assemblage of learned men, such as, with the possible rivalry of Cordova a little later, was not to be paralleled, till the capture of Byzantium and the overthrow of the Byzantine Empire, combined with Medicean generosity made, in the later fifteenth century, Florence the capital of the intellectual world.

But the Hun was at the door. Charlemagne, the greatest character of the West during the

early middle ages, was succeeded by rulers under whom the whole edifice, built up by him, crumbled away: and so the great Islamic Empire ruled by Mamun (almost Charlemagne's contemporary) very soon after his death, ceased to exist. Within less than fifty years, it will be hopelessly split up, never to cohere again. During the Abbaside period, the Government had become more and more Persian in character till, at the time of Mamun's death, the Arab element became quite negligible. A few more years and the ruling power will be neither Arab nor Persian but Turkish, and since that time up to now by far the greater part of Islam has been under Turkish rule and to a considerable extent Turkish ideas. Fortunately alike for Islam and civilisation, the Turks have but few religious or philosophic ideas (and Islam is still essentially Semitic in its fundamentals) and so have not super-imposed any of their ideas in Islamic culture, though Persian thought has modified it in many ways and with the Shiahs very completely.

Another son of Harun Al Rashid succeeded Mamun. His name was Ishaq, but he changed it for Motasim on his succeeding to the Caliphate. The troops at first wished Mamun's son, Abbas, to succeed him, but the young man had no desire to be a competitor with his uncle and so Motasim peaceably ascended the throne. Like his brother he was a Mutazalite and like his brother he tried to crush opposition to his unorthodox views by violent persecution. He failed and orthodoxy after a time got the upper hand again and the Mutazalites instead of being the persecutors became the persecuted. It is the old story over and over again. The main event of this reign, and I have

chosen it as a term to this essay, was the founding of Samarra, sixty miles up the Tigris from Baghdad. The latter place was a great city in which the Caliph dwelt amongst his subjects ; the former was a palace with huge barracks attached in which the troops, the Turkish bodyguard, dwelt. Up to this time the Caliph was in theory at least accessible to all Muhammadans. He had been the Master of his troops and had ruled with the aid of Governors whom he appointed and deposed as the real head of Islam. Now all this is changed. The Turkish Chiefs will be the real rulers of the Empire. Caliph after Caliph will be deposed, incarcerated, murdered according to the whims of the Bodyguard Generals or of the private soldiers, desirous generally of a change in order to get extra pay. Now and again we have the case of a Caliph of greater calibre asserting himself for a while, but the greater part of the next four centuries the story is the same, the Caliph a puppet and the Turkish Generals the real authority. Then came Hulagu and his Mongols and swept the whole sham away. In 1249 the Mongols sacked Baghdad, slew the last shade of an Abbaside ruler and the Caliphate came to an end. Not that there was any want of rival Caliphs, there was one in Egypt, and after Hulagu if any Caliph was legitimately so, by any law of divine succession, it was the Egyptian Caliph, who was used, however, by the Mameluk rulers of the country much as a domestic slave, to be starved, beaten and, if necessary, put to death. Then there was a Caliph in what is now Morocco, another in Spain, and Kairwen also boasted the possession of one. All these Caliphs had, indeed, one feature in common, they were all of the tribe of Koreish, a necessary

condition, as the chief authority on the matter tells us, of every holder of the office. It is only in modern days that the doctrine has been advanced by any orthodox Muhammadan Doctor that such a condition is not essential and it probably never would have been heard save for political reasons when Egypt fell into the hands of the Osmanli Turk.

But if even the shadow of the Caliphate remained, its power, even if exercised by the Turkish Mayors of the Palace, was not at all what it was in the days gone by. Tahirides, Saffarides and many others in the East; Tulumides and their successors in Egypt, all became independent dynasties, and any allegiance they paid to the Caliph was nothing more than a fee to get their positions acknowledged. The pilgrimage to Mecca was more under them than anything else, but we read of such pilgrimages being interrupted, the Kaaba plundered, the black stone carried away. Europe and Asia from the ninth century to the eleventh were both plunged into something not far from anarchy. In each case out of this anarchy again will arise more settled Government, but with this I, in this sketch, have nothing to do. As far as I am concerned this essay is done. I have briefly with the aid mainly of Sir William Muir and Weil sketched the outlines of the political and external history of the two centuries from the Prophet's death during which the Caliphate was the greatest driving force in the East, probably, at the time, in the world.

PART II.

CHAPTER VIII.

BATTLE OF MARATHON.

THE battle of Marathon has been described as a turning point in the world's history. Previously from long before the days of written history, the story of the nations had been largely the pressure and encroachment of the East upon the West. Large sections of the Aryan race, at least such as the Teuton and the Celt, had pushed their way through the plains of Central Europe down to the three great peninsulas of the south ever supplanting the aboriginal inhabitants. The story of the sailors of Phœnicia is largely that of an eastern race pushing further and further west. Whether the race were Aryan or Semitic, Persian or Phœnician, it was ever the same, ever further towards the setting sun. But with Marathon, where a few hundred Athenian infantry defeated a Persian army division, this western pressure from the east was checked. In its place eastwards, there was the counter pressure from the west culminating in Alexander the Great's miraculous exploits and the Roman defeat and overthrow of Carthage. Carthage, indeed, is further west than Rome, but it was the metropolis of the Phœnicians, the greater Tyre, where the Semite had planted himself so that he might dominate the Western Mediterranean Sea. Alexander the Great's expedition and the Hellenic Kingdoms which followed after his death, made Greek influence predominant in the

towns and in the polity of Hither Asia. And that work that Hellenism began in the spheres of culture and thought, Imperial Rome completed in the spheres of law and administration. The Parthian was indeed a semi-Hellenised State. A tragedy of Euripides was being played when Crassus' head was thrown before the Parthian King, and it was only with the advent of the Sassanides that the East began again to hold its own against the western invader. But all that can be said of the third to the sixth century is that it held its own, no more. With Muhammadanism, however, came a great change on the East. In the secular strife between East and West, Islam stands for the last great reaction, the re-balancing of the scales, the East again triumphant over the oppressing West. And from the day of the Flight from Mecca till now the conflict goes on. First of all, the East swept all before it; its triumph culminating with the conquest of Spain and the invasion of France; beaten back at Tours, it only very slowly lost its grip of Spain while it strengthened itself elsewhere. And again after the destructive Mongol had brought desolation and destruction over the civilisations of East and West alike, the East again asserted itself in the Osmanli Turk and Turkish Empire. The gradual atrophy and falling to pieces of this once potent Empire is only one more step in the endless struggle. And no one can say that the last stage in the story has now come and that there will be no more see-saw, no more West pressing on the East or the East repelling the West. The elements, indeed, in this struggle have never been the same. The Aryans of early days were the protagonists at one time of the struggle; but now their position is

changed and instead of being for the greater part at least, of the East, they have become the main body of the West. The victories of Islam were those of the Arab race, but as will be seen, such Arab ascendency was of comparatively short duration; within a little more than two centuries from the death of the Prophet, a new race began to take the direction of affairs, the Turks, and the strength, the physical force of Islam has resided largely, if not mainly, in them ever since. Along with their allied race, the Mongols, they have for centuries been the scourges and conquerors of vast regions in Upper and Hither Asia. And at the present day we see the Chinese and Japanese coming into the great world current with their teeming populations. The results are incalculable and prediction is foolish, at least anything like distant prediction. The Semite, all the same, though comparatively few in number in the history of the world, takes a place which neither Turk nor Mongol possesses. The latter's genius has been by way of destruction; the former's construction. Hebrew and Arab are closely, ethnically as well as historically, related and in the language and history of ideas also allied. Without them the world would be much poorer, but one would hardly miss the Mongol or Turk. Who is this Semite?

SEMITES.

Gætano defines the Semite races as that great group of Asiatic races that appear to be of a common origin on account of the existing resemblances between their languages, i.e., a race all descended from one people speaking at one time one tongue.

This definition, although it might be criticised as not quite scientifically accurate, for there are branches of the Semitic races, such as the Western Jews who have lost all touch with the original language of their ancestors, is yet sufficient for all practical purposes. The races, known as Semites, to put it in another way are the Arabs, ancient and modern, the Hebrews, the races inhabiting Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia, the Abyssinians and one of the two races which constituted the ancient Egyptians, whose descendants are the present day Copts, a small part of the world's inhabitants surely but with an influence in its history quite out of proportion to their comparative number. The two great mundane religions, Christianity and Muhammadanism alike, took their birth from amongst them; so, too, did Judaism. In many other ways, in arts, science and all the complex factors, which make up civilisation, they can only be placed second, if second, to ancient Greece and Rome and modern Western Europe.

The Semite has a very marked character of his own, a character which has pervaded every branch, ancient and modern. He on the one hand is, when occasion calls, self-sacrificing, brave, having the highest conception of religious matters, of an exalted religious feeling and charitable to his own; on the other hand, sensual and cruel to a degree. Ancient Hebrew and modern Jew, the Arab of the Prophet's day and the Arab to-day alike show abundant instances of the truth of this description. Hard is the word which can be with great truth applied to every section of the race.

Where did it originate has, at times, been much discussed. Without going back to origins, without

troubling oneself with questions as to the origin of man, whether the first ancestors of the human race came into being in one place or in many, in Java, Tropical Africa or elsewhere, it is generally considered now that the Semite had his original home in Arabia.

We know that not very many thousand years ago the Northern World passed through what is commonly known as the glacial period. Owing to causes connected with the precession of the Equinoxes and with the comparative positions of the Sun and of the Earth the greater part of the Northern Hemisphere has at various times been covered with thick ice. After the last of these times only gradually did this ice recede and the Earth's surface get free of its weight. Countries immediately to the south of this ice cap were, necessarily cooler than at present, both on account of its proximity and on account of their obliquity at the different seasons to the sun. Now there is nothing to show that any considerable part of Arabia was under ice during the glacial period, but there is abundant evidence that Arabia was then a very different country from what it is now. During, and at the end of that time, the rainfall over the whole of the country must have been plentiful. Large *Wadis* or tracts of ancient rivers are to be found all over the land. These rivers have dried up and at the present day, where once large volumes of water discharged themselves into the seas around, we find nothing but deep-worn watercourses with no, or next to no, water in them, filled with boulders, which show the velocity with which they once flowed. The story of the Garden

of Eden, it has several times been pointed out, gives a true account of the land at the time the story first came into existence. The four rivers were actual rivers ; only one now remains, the Euphrates, as regards all the others where there were once streams, there only stony depressions remain ; and as there are many of these one may, as his imagination directs, trace out the other three. The land Marilah where gold was found, presumably in river washings, is not now known. No more water flows from which the washings may continue.

Central Arabia seems to have been the first home of the Semite. Now, with the exception of a few cases, the desert rules supreme, over the larger part of that region, but in ancient days the country was covered with vegetation ; with the gradual diminution, ending up in many parts of the country with the absolute failure of the rains, vegetation alike of trees and grasses has come to an end ; where flocks in plenty once pastured, there is nothing but waste. In Yemen alone, where the South-West Monsoon still brings up rain in abundance from the Indian Ocean, do we find ample vegetation and life ; elsewhere, almost everywhere, the desert. And this drying up has not been the affair of a day, it has been a matter of thousands of years and still continues. And this is the first and main explanation of the gradual migrations of the Semite races. They have left Arabia either in great numbers or in small bands, entering into new countries by force or by peaceful penetration, mainly to avoid the results of this gradual drying up, spurred on by hunger.

From Central Arabia at a very early date, a large part of them must have travelled towards the

South-East to Arabia Felix, Yemen. Probably in the times immediately after the ice-age this part of the country, owing to the violent rains and the intense vegetation, was hardly habitable by man; but gradually the rain diminished in volume and the vegetation became thinner, and as soon as this was the case, the land was eminently fitted for habitation. The Arab of this country is ethnically the same as the Arab of the rest of the country, but his fortunes have been very different. Early he became an agriculturist and a trader; then he took to the sea and before even the Phœnicians of the Mediterranean, became a great sea-farer. And not only so, by reason of his trade, we find him established wherever there were trading centres, particularly up the Red Sea littoral and near it. And so we find the Occidental Arab, with markedly distinct characteristics from the primitive Arab, the real article as we may call him, the Arab of the Centre. Most of the town dwellers and agriculturalists as opposed to the Nomads of the Hedjaz and the other coastal regions of West Arabia came from Yemen. And when the Prophet came and after him the invasions of the lands beyond, the Southern Arab, the sons of Kalb, as they are known, became the main support of the army that conquered Syria and Egypt. Those that remained behind, as seen, have had but the slightest influence on Islam. All along the Southern Coast of Arabia heretics of every sort have abounded since the days of the latter Ommayads.

The remaining Semites of the West came in all probably, too, from Yemen. Crossing the Red Sea at the narrowest point, they stayed in the south and

became the progenitors of the modern Abyssinians or proceeding north, conquered the aboriginal Egyptians, members of the old Mediterranean family, and became the rulers of that country. The dynasties, we know from the very first, were of Semitic stock. Pharaohs and the Pyramids, were the results of this invasion from the south.

The history of Yemen, before the Prophet, is only known in a fragmentary way to us. We know of a great dynasty, the Minoan, whose rule extended, as may be inferred, from the lists of kings, which we have, for many centuries. We know of their gradual decay and of their being supplanted by the Sabeans ; we know, too, that in the day of Yemen's power, the inhabitants were navigators who sailed on the one hand up the Persian Gulf, to the West Coast of India and probably beyond, and on the other hand up the Red Sea. The navigation of this latter has always been difficult and dangerous and the Minoan and his successors largely used the land route. It was from the upper part of the Red Sea or the land adjacent, that merchandise found its way to the Mediterranean and the west. The land route was marked by settlements along its length and Mecca was probably one of these. It has been suggested with a considerable amount of plausibility that the country itself in the north-west acquired the name of Misr from the South and that tales as regards the Exodus from Egypt and other Biblical stories, are really traditions concerning this part of North Arabia, to which owing to the similarity of the names for the two an Egyptian locale has been given though really they are stories of North Arabia. However this

may be, it is certain that the merchant of South-West Arabia was pressing his trade from an early time up the Red Sea eastern littoral, either by sea or by land, and for such purpose settled, sometimes temporarily, sometimes for good along the trade route. Though a parenthesis, it may not be amiss to mention here that the volume and importance of this trade route varied largely according to the condition of the north-easterly route, that of the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. When the country between the Gulf and the Sea was peaceful, when traffic was uninterrupted, this route would naturally be the one over which a great deal of the exported produce of the eastern countries, India and the rest would go. But if there was war between State and State, if the communication for any reason became difficult, this same produce would take the sea route and avoid the perils of the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean by land journey. South-East African produce would naturally always, when exported, travel via South Arabia to the North. The prosperity of Yemen depended upon both sea and land and it fell off with the gradual drying up of the country. Tradition connects it with the bursting of the bank of a great tank in which water was stored, the Tank of Mahreb. However this may be, it is certain that before the time of Christ its prosperity was well on the down grade, and with this loss of prosperity the trade by sea also declined. But still it existed and the Southerners were found at the different resting stations all along the Eastern side of the Red Sea. Medina itself seems to have been largely inhabited by them, for when the great

invasions after the death of the Prophet came, we find the Southern Arab largely coming from this town.

Whether Central Arabia was the original home of the Semite or not, it was certainly the region which gave the largest number to the armies which after the Prophet's death carried abroad the faith of Islam; it is to the Southern Arab, however, that we have to look for the development of ideas. He is never found to have been in the stage of gross idolatry, which characterised the Arab of the Centre and North. Worship of the heavenly bodies there was and this from a very early day, but there is no worship of stock or stone, of animal or holy place such as we find elsewhere. From the names which we find on the inscriptions, it stands out clearly that the Southern Arabian Kings and great men had theophorous names, not those of separate divinities but of divinity in the abstract. One peculiarity in their worship of the heavenly bodies was that, the moon was the male, the sun the female deity. Whether this is a relic of the days of matriarchy, when the woman was the ruler of the family or not is a matter of conjecture, probably it was so, but even still unto this day in modern Arabic the word Shams for sun is feminine.

The migrations from Central Arabia to the West must have begun thousands of years before Christ. It is at least probable that some of them had settled about the Persian Gulf before another race known as the Sumerians arrived there. We can only guess who these Sumerians were, and except that they arrived by sea, we have no clue. Quite possibly they were Chinese or from China, and in

any case they brought a civilisation superior to what they found and for many hundreds of years they super-imposed their religious and social ideas on the Semites, already in the land. It was only very gradually that the Semite re-took his place as being the ruling inhabitant in these regions and traces of their rule survived to the last period of the Babylonian kingdom up to the time that the whole of Hither Asia fell under the sway of the Persian Kings. It is necessary to note here that the physical conditions round the Persian Gulf have changed largely even in historic times. The Euphrates and Tigris, as late as the days of Alexander the Great, flowed separately into the Gulf and not as now uniting many miles above. The land has come out of water comparatively rapidly. It has been calculated, indeed, that in less than 2,500 years, the water has receded more than ninety miles ; and the recession of the Gulf has meant fresh inhabitants in its border and more difficult navigation. Probably it was on these encroachments of the land that the Sumerians mainly settled ; the Semites also as an under-class more or less finding here also a place of settlement.

It has been remarked that the most typical aspect of the Semite infiltration of Babylon was its exceeding slowness. It was evidently not military but a regular outflow from Central Arabia, which was then what it continued to be up to the Prophet's time, the mother of nations. At the same time the Semite found his way across to Africa, from Abyssinia where he probably first settled and became the ruling race as far as Egypt. There he found the Mediterranean race, as it is

termed, in possession, but it is really ascribed to him that he brought with him civilisation and that the pyramids and the Great Age in Egypt began with its conquest or penetration by the Semite.

Other migrations, subsequent to those, of which we have written, in the dim past, took place, which resulted in the Mesopotamian plain and the coast land beneath it being peopled by Semites; amongst others we would speak of the Chaldeans, seemingly an East Arabian tribe which migrated comparatively late, but what more concerns history is the great Armenian over-running of Palestine, Syria and the countries contiguous. This is of the highest historical importance, not only by reason of the fact that Armenian became, and for many centuries continued to be, the language spoken throughout these countries but on account of the fact that the Armenian type of physique and character is the type of the races inhabiting these countries to this day. Their advance guard was the Hebrews, who came in all probability in detachments. In the historic days of their kings, some of the tribes, such as those of Reuben and Simeon seem to have passed out of recognition. Probably these represented the first comers. The books of Joshua, and of Judges tell us of these invasions and when studied, without the later glosses, give us perhaps the most graphic accounts we have in any history of an intruding race, gaining ground one day, driven back the next, but never obtaining complete mastery of the country. Parallels in the world's history (though not parallels in the written records) are many. And so by the time of the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in the 6th century before Christ, we find the Semitic race

throughout Palestine and Syria, in the Tigris and Euphrates lands up to the highlands where the Armenians were round the Persian Gulf and in Africa from Abyssinia northward. Concerning the Armenians there is a dispute as to how far they are Aryans and how far Semites. In Asia, the Semites had either completely destroyed or, in any case, absorbed all earlier races, and in Africa the old Mediterranean race in Egypt at least still existed. In Arabia itself the trading of the Western Arabs still flourished; goods from the African and Indian coast still went by land or sea, by caravan or ship up the Red Sea, the rest of the country save where there were trade centres and a few parts in the North-West (leaving out Yemen) was given over to the Nomads whose life had hardly changed from the days of Abraham. The Persian rule which lasted more than two centuries made but little impression upon the Semitic character of Western Asia. The Persians were soldiers and administrators; they hardly entered into the life of the country. Far more important was the influence of Alexander the Great's invasion. He and his successors brought with them the civilisation and culture of the Greek towns and stamped their character throughout the urban communities of Syria and Mesopotamia. We know in one instance, that of the Jews, how fiercely this civilisation was resented; and the triumph of the Meccabees was the triumph of the Semite against the encroaching Hellenic ideas. By the time of the Romans there were Arab kingdoms on the edge of the Peninsula. Once in Augustus' time an armed expedition penetrated the Peninsula but of permanent results there were none. The two best

known of these kingdoms, Ghassan and Hira, were the first on the Syrian and the second on the Persian frontier; both were nominally Christian; but the Christianity was of a low order and in both, when the Muhammadans came, there was but little resistance to the change from Christianity to Islam. But throughout the greater part of the country we read but little of kingdoms or kings. In the desert the old customs prevailed; no king, no master, each small community went its own way. And from what we know of the towns seemingly these were ruled by oligarchies; sometimes, as in the case of Medina, by rival factions. We would say here that as opposed to Western Arabia, where largely through Jewish or Christian influence, there was a strong tendency towards monotheism or at least against the prevailing idolatry, in the rest of the country, the grossest superstitions prevailed. Human sacrifice, totemism in a crude form, fetishism are all to be found with the worship of springs and high places, of holy cairns and of the heavenly bodies.

In the time of the Prophet the inhabitants of the country were either townsmen or nomads. The total population has been fixed at about six million, probably almost double of the number now; of these a small portion were townsfolk but the greater number were dwellers of the wilderness. It is not incorrect to describe the latter as in a perpetual state of hunger. For centuries Semite races had left the prison of the Arabian deserts but many prisoners remained behind and it needed but vigorous leadership and direction to burst the prison bounds and get beyond the

regions of sand and perpetual thirst. The Arabs of the centre, when they found that Islam meant a change from isolation, hunger and thirst, to a state of opulence, threw themselves with the greatest vigour into the new movement, which was to take them out of the sands into lands, some of which might, without much exaggeration, be termed teeming with milk and honey. After Abu Bakr had with sword and fire taught them that a nominal allegiance to Islam was incumbent on all dwellers of Arabia, their conversion to its tenets carried with it the duty to spread this religion beyond the national limits and with this duty the right to appropriate the good things of this earth wherever found. The main portions of the victorious armies came from the Centre; comparatively few even of the leaders from West Arabia. And those that remained behind, they and their children, remained behind mostly for ever, and soon reverted to the old methods of life just as if the Prophet had never lived and taught. The one thing necessary to the successful Arab was bravery. The Caliph Omar saw this when he prohibited his becoming an owner of the soil. When he became this; he gradually ceased to be the warrior of Islam and as he ceased, so gradually the power departed from him, till the Turk, the resident of Central Asia, who never took kindly to agricultural pursuits but was ever a devotee of the sword, took his place in the first rank. The desert Arab of the Prophet's time was indeed from birth a warrior, not I may say a soldier; living in small communities, with his hand against every man's. With the knowledge that he might be killed and his folk captured at any day and in any place, what

could he be but a warrior, ever ready with his sword, to protect his own or to assail his neighbour. Stratagems and spoils were his very life.

Of learning or rather literature at the time of the Prophet he had none. We have a considerable collection of pre-Islamic poetry, collected after Muhammad's days, but the poems themselves were handed down from person to person and not by the written page. In these poems or rather songs one learns of the whole or the greater part at least of the Arab's life. The keen pleasure of living in the open, the keener pleasure of the successful fray, the heat of the day, the refreshing coolness of night, all are to be found therein. Nor is woman forgotten, not the woman of the latter Baghdad erotic lays, but the woman, the help-meet and companion of her husband. Next to bravery the Arab put as the highest virtues eloquence and generosity. Of the latter we have many instances, the best known is that of Hatim-Tai. Of the former, history and the poems alike inform us. The Prophet himself in the Koran speaks of himself as the illiterate Prophet, but his eloquence must have been of the noblest. The Koran itself shows abundance of this eloquence in the written word and it can easily be understood how the burning words, often recorded therein, must have touched an audience, who more than any other people enjoyed listening to an orator.

Of the first importance to the Arab was the camel; the horse was a comparatively recent importation from the West and even in the early Islamic armies, there were comparatively few. But the camel was his very life; its milk was his main food from infancy and those that connect the food

of a population and its character have deduced from its particular nature much of the Arab's temperament. Doughty, the most faithful of modern observers of the nomad Arab, who lived with them in their desert homes for years, remarks that camel's milk, when first taken, is apt to give cramp, but as soon as the stomach gets accustomed to it, it infuses into the body the vigour and special virtues necessary to fight against the rigours of the Arabian climate. The horse, on the other hand, is not a common animal in Arabia. Job, the typical rich Sheikh of Bible story did not possess them. And, as I have said above, in the great battles, Yarmuk, Kadesia and Nehavend it takes but a subordinate place; but what horses they have are of rare virtue, and specially those of Nejd, and their virtues again are ascribed largely to the fact that camel's milk is one of their main foods.

The Arab's favourite weapon was the sword. Other weapons, such as the bow and the lance, are but of secondary importance. Of Arabic names for it there are many. A poet describes it as the pillow on which the warrior lays his head when sleeping alone at night in the desert and his faithful companion whether he be in a crowd or in the fields or wilderness Many swords, indeed, had special names: thus Saad Ibn Ali Wakkas named his, Mala ; the Prophet's own, was called Dzul Magar; and the sword which Khalid wrested from a Yemenite warrior, the Samsamah.

The better class of sword and lance were of foreign make. Swords of Indian origin (Sayfal Hind) were of special repute. Later, indeed, we read of schools of armourers both in Yemen and Northern Arabia on the confines of the Byzantine

power. It was the latter that produced the famous Damascus blades. But these were manufactured by non-Arabs.

As to towns, Mecca was far the most important at the time of the Prophet. The Black Stone, probably an aerolite, had traditions stretching back into remote antiquity and it became, along with the Kaaba, or temple, the centre of the religious worship of the Arabs, town and nomad alike, for a great distance around. But Mecca's importance was not due to the Kaaba and Black Stone alone or even principally; it was mainly due to its being a centre of traffic. When the caravans from Yemen proceeded by land up the littoral of the Red Sea, the central halting place was Mecca; subsequent Muhammadan tradition, which it may be said emanated from Medina, represented the trade of this town to be that of the Koreish alone. In this it is certainly wrong; many were the traders and trading families, not belonging to the Koreish, who dwelt there. The Koreish's pre-eminence, acquired a few generations previous to the Prophet, was based on the fact that after many disputes between the different nomadic tribes dwelling round about with each other and with the townsman it was decided to entrust the custody of the Black Stone and the Kaaba to the Koreish alone. The traffic mentioned above was of very long standing and probably originated when the Minoans were the ruling race in Yemen. But all tradition, and if this tradition is probably correct, claimed them as North Arabs, as the sons of Modar. Far different was the case of Medina. There is little doubt that its inhabitants came from the South, the sons of Kalb, but Medina

was not a trading centre. Agriculture was their principal concern. Mecca is built in a barren valley; Medina, a comparatively fertile country; in the former, agriculture would not have given the inhabitants a livelihood, however scanty. In the latter, it afforded plenty.

Away from the native of Arabia, whether nomad or townsman, there was a considerable foreign element in the country, almost entirely Jewish. To the Western Arab, one who had never taken kindly to the endless multiplication and division of the Godhead, the monotheism of the Jew made a powerful appeal. The religion of Abraham, a sublimated Judaism, was held by others, named in Sprenger and other books before the days of the Prophet or before the time when he began to preach. But Judaism, with all its ceremonies, was not the religion of one or two but of large numbers. A great part of these, probably the greater part, were real Jews, Jews by birth, but a considerable number would be proselytes. But with the close ethnic connection between Jew and Arab, such proselytes very soon became indistinguishable from the Jew by birth. This community was not beloved by the peoples it lived amongst; we may go further and say it was cordially disliked. The reasons for this were much the same as the reason for disliking the Jew everywhere. Although possessed of an ancient religion and an old and rich culture, their defects in ancient Arabia are many of them, as those attributed to them elsewhere. The complete want of concord, the mania of endless discussion, of abusing each other; the impossibility of acting together for a common end, the intolerance of all discipline for

the common good ; the passion for occult sciences, for incantations, witchcraft and, most important of all, their cowardice, which was apparent to all ; such is the description by a modern writer of their defects, and he adds there is no wonder that instead of being masters in Pagan Medina, as they might have been, they became clients and that, when the Prophet became hostile to them, their destruction was sure and swift. To this it may be added that, though ethnically closely allied to the Arab, they kept studiously apart from him. They were the chosen race and no close intimacy united them to their Arab brethern. A community which persists in keeping itself aloof from the greater community of which it is a part, always runs great risks and the greater they are, the more they are based on some fanciful superiority, the more certain is their ultimate ruin and the greater the fall.

The Arab, himself, and particularly the nomad, can be best classed as indifferent by nature and habits to religious calls. At the time of Muhammad he, as a rule, had no fixed creed. The Kaaba had many idols, to which he paid lip-worship when in its proximity. In other towns, too, as at Taif, there was a temple and idols for him to worship ; a certain number of abstract ideas made into gods or godlings, such as Destiny, were prayed to by him ; but of the greater religious ideas and conceptions, as opposed to time-honoured practices, he had little. He had too much to think about keeping himself from want and suffering in the present life to think much about the life to come. And his whole energies were solely directed to the present. It is not without importance that the Arabic language has no future tense.

The Hebrew, Jewish and Muhammadan religions are purely Semitic in origin. Of influences external to the Semitic race we find * but little trace, though in the matter of angels and demons in Judaism and possibly to a less extent in Muhammadanism there may be signs of Persian Zoroastrianism. These Semites, though a small minority of the world's inhabitants, have had the most indelible influence on its history. The most probable inference as to their origin is that they came from Central Arabia. After the last Glacial age, when the ice was in retreat, this land became early free and enjoyed a climate in which man could flourish, while the highlands at the head waters of the Tigris and Euphrates and the lands south, south-east and east of the Caspian were still covered with fathomless snow. Central Arabia then enjoyed a climate very much like that of the uplands in Yemen round about Sanaa. Vegetation was plentiful, great rivers abounded and man had a climate ideally suited to his wants. But gradually the sun became fiercer as it returned more to the present north by reason of the precession of the Equinoxes. Vegetation languished or perished, the rivers became *Wadis*, dried up stony torrents and the climate became one in which life was the survival of the fittest. There was from that time a gradual dispersion of the Semitic race, sometimes gradual, sometimes accelerated. Gradually

* There is one important exception—the doctrine of immortality. It was not an early Jewish doctrine, "can man praise thee in sheol," we find it clearly enunciated in the Avasta; Christianity had it from its start at the time of Christ; a strong party, the Sadducees, denied it. But by the time of Muhammad, the Jews probably almost universally accepted it and with it the Christian idea, as taught by the apostolic, Christian Church of heaven and hell.

the Semitic became dominant in the lands between the two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the sole race in Palestine; also crossing over at an early date into Africa where they became one of the two elements of the Egyptian race known to us in antiquity. Some became seafarers, so the Phœnicians and the inhabitants of Southern Arabia; also the dwellers near the mouths of the two great Mesopotamic rivers; many especially, in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt became cultivators of the soil; but a great part of the race remained what they were in early times and what a large part of the Arabs still are, a pastoral race, possessed of cattle, roaming hither and thither as pasture and water guided them. Of such a pastoral race we find many traces in the earliest Hebrew records; indeed, one of the earliest stories tells how the nomad despised agriculture. Abel offers a bloody sacrifice; Cain, the first fruit of the land. God is pleased with Abel's offering not with Cain's. The God of the story is still a nomad's god to whom the propitious sacrifice is animal's blood and not the bloodless produce of the fields.

The agricultural life may be a higher grade of civilisation than the pastoral; it is to this latter, however, that the origins of Semitic religions should be traced. Abraham was a man with great herds in his possession, and Muhammad in his early formative days was largely a wanderer in charge of cattle. The great heat, the brilliant nights of Arabia, the free air, the glorious constellations alike appeal to the contemplative mind. The heavens show forth the glory of God in a fashion unknown in colder climes. It is claimed, I cannot

say with perfect justice but certainly with an appearance of such, that these Semitic religions not only originated in Arabia, but amongst the races who inhabited the narrow strip bordering the Red sea. From these, it is said, originated the Hebrew religion in its earlier forms and from these, in later days, came Islam. It is certainly true that the Hebrewism we know in the earlier Historic books of the Bible and of the Hexateuch is essentially Arab in character. It is also essentially local; the Baals of the various water springs, the tribal Gods, all show signs of Arab origin. It is only when the Assyrian, the first of the various world monarchs that have originated in Hither Asia, comes hurtling into the Syrian and Arab world that the localism of the earlier days merges into the monotheism of the Prophets, that Jehovah, the tribal Hebrew God, becomes the maker of heaven and earth, the one that wearies not nor sleeps, the eternal Jehovah of the Prophets.

To the primitive Semite, two objects of nature made a special appeal, the heavenly bodies and the water springs. To those who have resided for any time in Egypt, Arabia or Mesopotamia, the first speak in a way unknown to the inhabitants of more temperate climes. A night, particularly a moonlight night, is far preferable to the hot dusty day. No wonder the early Arab worshipped the hosts of heaven, particularly the planets. With the greatest of Semitic cities, Babylon in particular, the worship of the planets is indissolubly connected. Istar (Venus), Nebo (Mercury), Nergal (Mars), Merdoch (Jupiter), Ninib (Saturn) were the great gods of Chaldea. And as the heavens, so the water springs,

without which the cattle and flocks could not live, became the wandering Arab's special care. The Baalims, lords of these springs, were treated as kindly gods who needed propitiation all the same. They were all local. The Baal, the lord of one water spring, had no power over another. All that was expected from him by the wanderer, was an abundance of water while he, his family and his animals remained near. The typical Arab of former days was Abraham. A Sheikh with great belongings, wandering wherever he could find water and pasture, able to fight and overthrow a force, such as that of the four kings described in Genesis, with only his own servants, such is the ideal Sheikh even of this day. We have a later picture of another great Sheikh in a more recent record, but it does not need much insight to note how much truer to life is the picture come down to us by the earliest writings of Abraham, the man of popular story, than is that of Job, the character described in a drama, the object of which was rather to enforce a moral than to portray a life. And whereas to the Hebrew and still more to the Jew, Moses was the all-pervading and dominating character of their history, to the hundred and one non-Hebrew Semites, Abraham remained down to the days of the Prophet the real representative of Semitism. It was the religion of Abraham that Muhammad preached, his object, as stated by him, was to bring this again as the religion of the people. He taught, indeed, that it had never quite died out and we know that before his coming there were scattered teachers here and there who professed Abraham's religion and taught it to an unheeding world.

The religions of the Aryan peoples based themselves on quite different principles. To these races life had many other interesting features besides stars and watering places. Struggling with nature in the highlands of Western Central Asia or the lowlands of Southern Russia, she presented herself to the early Aryan in many forms of which the place held by the starry heavens and springs took but a secondary place. To them the heavens were not primarily the inhabitation of the shining ones, but the theatre on which storm and calm, sunshine and darkness, cold and heat, rain and drought, calm and wind was ever being played. According to their locale, so were ever the kindly and the hostile gods, a kindly god in one place being a hostile god in another, but it was this which was the foundation of their religious belief as regards the heavens above. And on earth their attractions and ideas were drawn to many phases of nature in which the water springs were very secondary. Mountains and valleys, great rivers and large waters, whether seas or lakes, droughts and inundations, these are a few of the many objects which occupied the earliest Aryan mind. There was one very important result from this difference between Semitic and Aryan. With the former as he becomes settled instead of a wanderer, the Baalim fade and from a worshipper of the heavenly bodies to monotheism, the step is not great. It was much easier for the Hebrew Prophets to rise to the conception of the one universal God, than for Aryan minds, from the multiplicity of their nature worship, to arrive at the same result. Monotheism is essentially of Semitic growth. This difference is fundamental.

It has in a hundred different ways influenced the history of the world. Judaism was essentially Semitic, but Christianity, which sprang from it, in its special significance, was not. The Christian doctrines of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Logos, all deviations from the strict monotheism of Judæa, are of Greek, that is of Aryan and not of Semitic origin. Incarnations are, indeed, special conceptions of the Aryan whether in Greece or India and where we find such incarnations incorporated with Muhammadanism, it is in countries inhabited by Aryans. The great home of the Ultra Shi-ites and their incarnations is Persia, an Aryan country. And I may say here that, while Christianity took much from Judaism, its predecessor, to which it added as its specific doctrines Aryan conceptions, the only influence of Christianity in the Koran is that Muhammad was the Paraclete promised by Christ. This doctrine in Muhammadan theology takes but a secondary place.

And again, I have already pointed out in my historical chapter how easily the Semitic countries accepted Muhammadanism. Egypt, Syria, Iraq, the old Semite's homes within less than a half century of the Hejira became not only conquered but completely, to coin the word, Muhammadanised. Far different was it with Persia in which political conquest and intellectual subjection did not go together. Persia, indeed, never ceased to object to its Arab conquerors and their religious ideas. With the Abbasides she regained a great deal of what she had lost; from her, emanated the numerous sects of Shiahs of every grade, in several of which Muhammadanism found little or no place; and for centuries

the old Magian religion held its ground partially not indeed openly, but practically amongst the people and indeed to this day there is a tinge of it in Persian thought. On the North African coast, now one of the most Muhammadanised parts of the world, the strife between Arab and Berber was long and bitter; although Arabs had emigrated there in great numbers, they always found strong adverse and hostile powers which they could not utterly overthrow. The penetration took many years and then it was thorough, but Islam there differs in many respects from the Islam of the Koran.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of what I have just written is the case of Asia Minor. The Arab invaders had no trouble in over-running Palestine and Syria, Damascus and Antioch. Hims and Edessa fell into their hands as soon as the Byzantine troops guarding them, were routed. But the Arab conquest extended no further. There is, indeed, a strong natural frontier in the Taurus and anti-Taurus ranges, but this would have availed little, if it were not for the people themselves. The people of Asia Minor were almost entirely Aryan, whereas in Syria they were almost entirely Semitic. And so for centuries after the Prophet, till the rise of the Seljuk dynasty in the eleventh century, Asia Minor remained a part of the Byzantine Empire, and it was, indeed, only the Osmanli Turk who finally in the fourteenth century caused the change of the people from Christianity to Islam.

The Semite has always been a hard man, generous often to the extreme, but perfectly willing at all times to inflict or endure suffering. "Thine eye shall not pity." So the Deuteronomist preaches

in his statement of the law and so has it been throughout history. Israelite history tells us of the Prophet Samuel hewing Agag to pieces before the Lord, of the extermination of the Canaanites, man, woman and child before the invading tribes, of the hewing of their enemies with saws of iron, and, after the captivity, of the wholesale extirpation of idolatrous tribes by those Jews who desired to be faithful to the law. And as with the Israelite, so with the Arab. Neither the Prophet nor his successors had much care for human life. Abu Bakr's Muhammadanising of Arabia was effected by sword and fire and the stories of rivers running red with blood, which occur more than once in early Muhammadan history, tell how freely human life was taken. And later on we read time after time how an Arab nobleman paid large sums of money to get his enemy, often his rival for place, into his hands, so that by torture he might extort large sums from him. We first read of this towards the end of the Ommayad period. It became commoner in the days of the Abbasides. To this day any one who has had dealings with Jew or Arab or other Semite can well attest that the same characteristics continue unchanged.

So much for the Semite generally. When we come to the Arab in particular, there is a double point of bi-section; townsman and Bedouin; Arab of the Centre and Arab of the Red Sea littoral. The two lines of division are not quite the same, for though the Arab of Central Arabia was mainly in the Prophet's time, a nomad, he was not always so. There were towns in Central Arabia where the life of a townsman was lived, and which after the conquest of

Irak, Basora and Kufa, were almost entirely inhabited by emigrants from Central Arabia. In Western Arabia there were, as there are to this day, plenty of Bedouins in the wilds between the main towns, whose protection had to be gained then as now by means of gifts ; for otherwise trade would have found no passage. The nomad is a clear case of the survival of the fittest. A burning sun, the want of shade, the scarcity of pasture for his cattle and of food for himself has made him what he is. He is bound to live in small communities, as there is no way by which in the desert food is procurable, for more than a small number. His hand is against every man's, and consequently from early youth he must always be alert. He is always thin and hungry. And so, when the call came, he was ready to escape from the prison in which he was confined and was the first to join the ranks of the Islamite armies that invaded Irak and Syria. In fact, it was really he that effected these conquests ; without him Islam would hardly have gone beyond Arabia. It is not too much to say that Central Arabia emptied itself after the Prophet's death on the countries around ; those that remained, they and their descendants, are much as the wandering nomad of the Prophet's time ; in the same state of culture, with little faith in the precepts of Islam and with no advance in civilisation. To talk of him as a genuine convert by persuasion is positively absurd. After Muhammad's death he revolted all over Arabia and it was only the superior cohesion of the Muhammadan troop and the skill of their leaders, notably of Khalid, that made him submit to Islam as the alternative to the sword, but once convinced of the material advantages of

Muhammadanism, he did not hesitate. He was the main strength of the armies that over-ran Irak and Syria and, once having conquered, like men long hungry, they hastened to enjoy in abundance the spoils of victory. Their hunger was insatiable; food, women, wine all had come their way and all they enjoyed to their full.

Different, however, although united by race, were the townsmen. Trade had been carried on from time immemorial in Yemen and from these traders had spread all along the trade routes. Of towns thus situate, Mecca held a foremost place. It was on the highway from the Indian Ocean, parts of Yemen to Syria or Egypt and, from antiquity, was a mart, where traders from North and South met. It was well for it that it was so, for of other advantages it had none. In a narrow valley, with lands round about simply unfit for gathered cultivation. Far different was the case of Medina. Round about there was plenty alike of cultivable land and land fit for the growth of the date. The Jew had early spied out this land and found it good. Then he had become a mighty cultivator, not however forgetting his other arts, especially the manufacture of swords. And by such arts he accumulated much wealth. He was unpopular, however, as he always seems to be, when in numbers. And so when the Prophet ruled at Medina and determined on the driving out of the Jew, the latter found no helper. Much of the arms, in particular the swords, employed by the Prophet's followers in the later wars during his life-time came from the spoils of the Jewish colonies.

Comparatively few of the Muhajirins and Ansars, the fellow exiles from Mecca and the helpers

of Medina, took a conspicuous part in the wars of conquest. Names there are of course such as Abu Obeida, Khalid, Al Saad, who commanded with great success, but the generality of these, particularly the Ansars of Medina, seem to have been content to stay at home and to leave the work to the Central Arabian tribes. With the latter went their wives and children and, in a few years, the countries on all sides of Arabia swarmed not only with Arab warriors but with their descendants. This was made easy by the fact of kinship; Irakis, Syrians, Egyptians all were kinsmen, all of the Semitic stock. In after years we read much of the contest between the Arab and the non-Arab Muhammadan. But the latter was almost always a Persian, that is, an Aryan and not a Semite. The Arab, after emigration, by degrees lost much of his Arab character, largely by marriages with other races, also largely by his change in life, by luxury taking the place of hardship, and wealth that of poverty. It is calculated by one of the latest authorities that the population of Arabia was twice what it is now. As to those that did not migrate, the Nomad quickly fell back to his old method of life. Read Doughty as to what he is now and it will appear how he is very much the same man as he was 1,300 years ago. At present he ignores the law of the Prophet as if Muhammad were never born. It is only where Wahabism has become politically the ruling power, in Nedj, that any attention is paid to the same. Otherwise the old order continueth. It is to be noted that Oman and Hadramaut, the most inaccessible parts of the country, sent but few soldiers to the wars. They have been but little affected by the

revolution which Islam brought about; on the other hand, they have ever been the home of heresies and heretics, of the Kharijites and Karmathians in the early days of Muhammadanism and of extreme form of Shi-ism to this day.

In my account of Abu Bakr I have pointed out again the antagonism between the North and South Arabia, the sons of Modar and Kalb, unaccountable and inextinguishable. It was chiefly the latter who settled in Syria and throughout the Ommayad period they held their own.

Sects rose early within the Muhammadan community. The great schism of Sunni and Shiah only came to a head after the massacre of Kerbala, but even prior to this the Kharijites were a powerful sect. Representing the Radicals of Islam in many ways, they drew together for a long time all the rebels against settled rule. Their spiritual descendants are the Ibadites of the present day. Their cruelties, rapes, rapines were so frequent that we are amazed to read them in history, and these were the people who professed to be in a special sense the people of God. Their type in European history is the Anabaptist of Munster. Comparatively speaking, a remarkable feature of early Muhammadan history was its tolerance. The only sects systematically persecuted were those whose aims were political. This accounts for occasional persecutions, amongst others, of Shiahs who were dangerous to the ruling dynasty. But otherwise thought was free. It was only with the Abbasides, starting with Hadi, that we find persecution for simply holding a belief; and alas! it was the Mutazalites, the so-called Rationalists of Islam, who were the

worst persecutors of them all once they got into power as they did in the days of Mamun and his successor. The persecuted, once on top, then showed himself the most rigid persecutor ; not an uncommon case ; but on the whole the early Islamic world was more tolerant than the contemporaneous world of the West. This may be largely explained by the fact that there were no priests in Islam. Theological Doctors may be as bigoted, but their influence rarely stretches as far as does that of a priestly order. This want of priesthood explains much in the history of Islam. Certain essentials of the Muhammadan faith are held by all good Muhammadans and a person cannot be accepted ordinarily as a Muhammadan who denies them. But beyond these essentials, there is a great amount of matter most of which is held as true, as being of a religious nature and yet no Muhammadan by declining to accept a part of it is excluded or has ever been excluded from the community. Traditions held to be authentic, might be disbelieved or disregarded and yet the person refusing belief was and is a good Muhammadan. The Koran lays down the law on many matters of ordinary life, and many are the interpretations thereof ; but all, from the literalist, who followed the school of Hanbal to the comparatively rationalist school of Hanifa, are entitled to be named true believers. The Ommayads are described by the writers of the Abbaside times as a godless, impious race, but this characterising of them had probably its origin rather in political than religious reasons. In the eyes of the descendants of Ali and Abbas alike they had usurped a place which belonged by right to one sprung from either of these

two families. And if the Ommayads had all been as pious as the second Omar, still after their fall, they would have been to Abbaside writers godless and impious. And how closely the Doctors of the law were associated with the ruling power may be seen from the fact that the Uliema of the day were much as the Uliema of the present day willing to give any opinion which the ruling power wished or sought, Mamun's Doctors gave opinions in favour of the Mutazalite; Dara Shikoh is put to death by Aurungzeb as a heretic, and the learned men of Delhi at the present day are only too ready to subscribe to any doctrine the prevalent Moslem feeling of the day may prescribe. Convenient assistants to the powers that be, these learned men have always been, though there have ever arisen individuals such as Shafi and Hanbal that no State pressure could force to express opinions which they did not believe.

I have stated above that tolerance was a main feature of early Moslem rule. Omar is credited with having inflicted various disabilities on Christians and Jews and, in particular, with having prescribed a distinctive dress, the forbidding to ride on horses and various other rules meant to degrade the Christian. But the opinion accepted by the modern day historian is that these were rules invented or anyhow only enforced in much later days, probably after the Abbaside came in power, save the expulsion of non-believers from Arabia, which was dictated probably as much from racial and political as from religious reasons, Omar was essentially tolerant. He refused to pray in the church at Jerusalem lest it should be turned into a mosque. His conversion of a part of the great church at Damascus for Christian

worship also witnesses this, and that his zeal for religion was kept in check by his political instincts is clearly shown by his forbidding wholesale conversions, as becoming a Mussulman meant diminution of land revenue. It is when we get a pious ruler like his namesake who declared the Prophet wanted the conversion of souls and not revenue that we find the other side of the picture, intolerance to other creeds. And to this day a great part of the persecutors of Christians in Mussulman lands have been due to political rather than to religious reasons, and, just as from the early days it has always been considered more politic to condemn a person as a heretic than a rebel, the excuse of heresy has always been ready at hand to condemn any obnoxious person. It is rather with the Shiahs than with Sunnis that intolerance is to be sought, especially as regards their doctrine of purity. Many a Shiah thinks, after contact with a Kafir or in some case even with a Sunni Muhammadan, it is necessary to purify himself by washing. A Christian traveller in Persia is always wise to have his own drinking tumbler, as the average peasant is unwilling to offer him a glass lest it become impure and therefore have to be thrown away or anyhow thoroughly cleansed.

Custom was the law of the old Arab; and it became the law, too, of the Mussulman world, the main difference being that new customs sprang up which took their origin in stories of the Prophet and his immediate successors and followers. To follow such customs was to follow the Sunna. And any attempt to go on unbeaten tracks was strongly opposed. The scope of this essay is only with the

first two centuries or a little more of Islamic history, while the Arab Caliphate really existed as a world power, and it would be going beyond to note how hard every innovation, not only in religious, but also in social and economic matters has had to fight before it was admitted as permissible, from the standpoint of the orthodox Muhammadanism. But much of this Sunna had its root from days prior to those of the Prophet. The ancient Arab was not a man of letters. Though he possessed a rich language with endless gradations of meaning, his use of this was not the written word, but poetry, often *ex tempore*, and eloquence before assemblies of fellow tribesmen. To be a poet, an orator and a mighty man of war, such was the absorbing ambition of the ancient Arab, and the arrival of the Prophet changed nothing in this respect. It was only outside influences, chiefly Byzantine, that made him a man of letters and gave Arabian literature the importance it secured in the medieval world. It was with the Abbaside, Mamun particularly, that their literature made its appearance, and it must not be forgotten what a great position Spanish Arabian learning held in this respect.

What we call Arab civilisation is only, indeed, Arab to a small extent. His was the driving force, but the main ingredients came from elsewhere, particularly from new Rome, Byzantium. Those of the Arabs, who either stayed behind or returned to Arabia, reverted quickly to ways of life and methods of thought not easily distinguishable from those obtaining in pre-Islamic days. The Bedouin, as I have said before, has always been indifferent in matters religious. The five daily prayers are

unknown to him, and to many of the tribes the pilgrimage to Mecca is but an opportunity for loot. The townsman is more impressionable and in Medina and Mecca, particularly the former at least, we read of pious and learned men studying and following the traditions of the Prophet, hundreds of years after his death. And it is the townsman that has been the mainstay and support of Wahabism. But the Arab, who went and stayed abroad (his first homes outside Arabia were in Syria, Egypt, Irak and Persia), was profoundly influenced by the civilisation he already found there. And this was particularly so in the case of Syria. From the Christian church he evolved his mosque; from Roman law very largely his law and both new Rome and Persia were powerful agents in matters of administration.

Before the time of the Prophet, we do not read of the Arabs having ever been so united as to form an army in the ordinary sense of the term. In the Abyssinian invasion of Arabia, which occurred only a very few years before his birth, the opposition was tribal, and in Persia's conquest of Yemen, also not long before Muhammad's time, all opposition seems to have been of scattered units. The two favourite weapons of the Arab in the days of the Prophet were the lance and the sword; cavalry in actual fighting was but little used. And the force which fought at Badr and Ohad, the two battles between the Prophet's followers and the Koreish army of Medina, could hardly be called armies. It was only in Abu Bakr's time in the war against the apostate Arab tribes that the Islamic force could lay any claim to this name. The genius of Khalid

beyond everything else contributed to make the tribal levies into a compact body. And this was continued long after the early day. The men who conquered on the Yarmuk and Kadesia still fought by tribes, which took the place of modern regiments. In military skill, the Byzantines were far superior. They had the traditions and teachings of old Rome behind them and their army was an army in the proper sense of the term. It was the élan, and the enthusiasm of the Arabs, which gave them the victory, in spite of their inferiority alike in military discipline and in armament. As to numbers, it is unsafe to rely either on Arab or Byzantine writers (we have not the Persian accounts). Probably in no case was there much difference in this respect. When the great military colonies were founded, the tribes were each given separate quarters, and their old organisation was maintained. There is nothing indeed in itself, as the present territorial organisation of European countries show, inconsistent in such arrangements and a compact army. But with the Arabs their love of independence, their dislike of obedience to any but their tribal Sheikh, made the work of transformation enormous. But it came about all the same, and by the days of Abdul Malik may have been said to be fairly complete. The particular form this army took was in very close imitation of the Byzantine system. The Persian army ceased to exist at a very early date and from it the Arab could, and did, learn almost nothing.

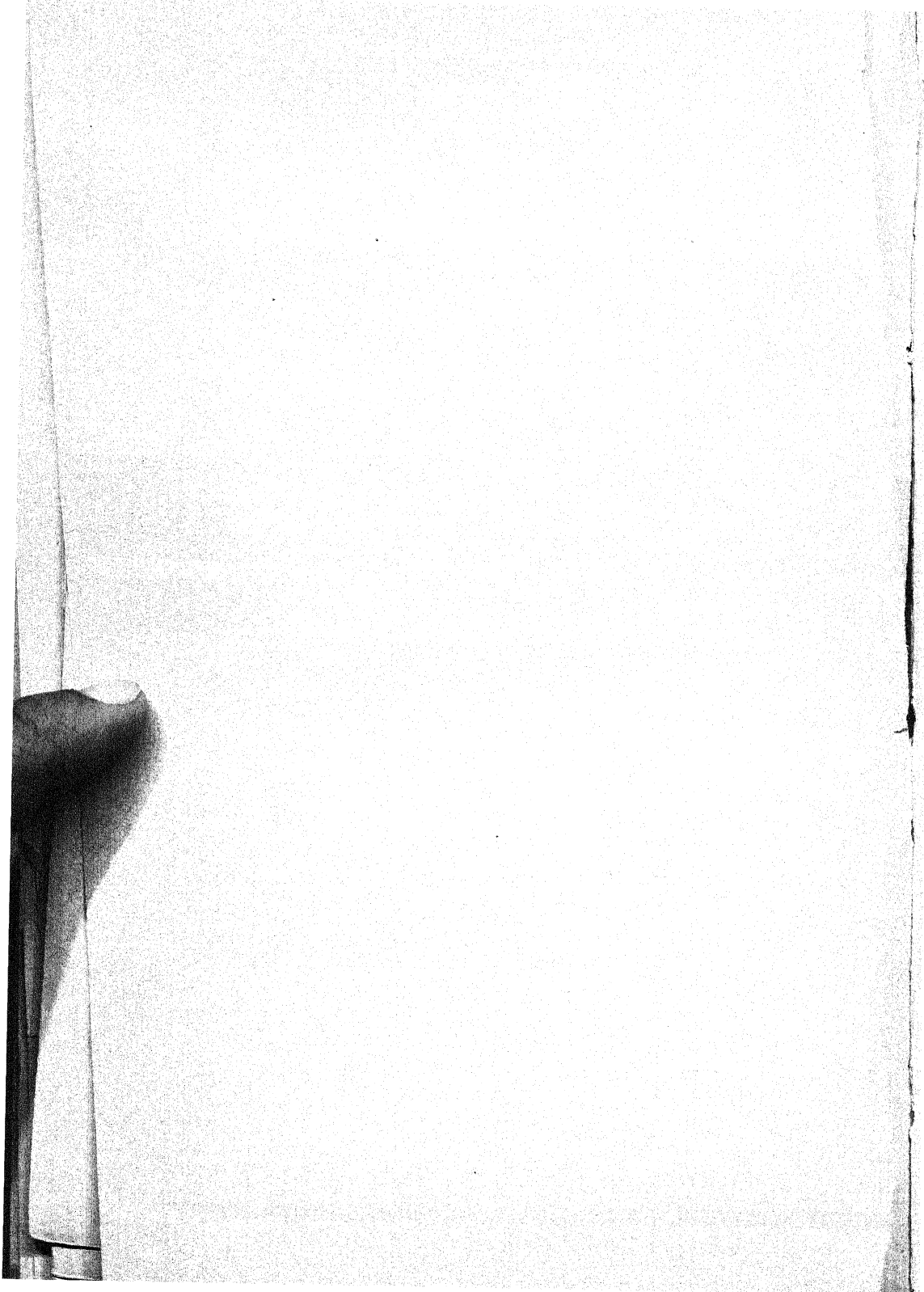
The Arab really gave up his specific natural character when he became a cultivator outside Arabia. The pastoral tribes of Central Arabia

were the bulk of the Arab force that carried the arms of the Prophet to countries beyond Arabia. And the change from pastoral life to settled cultivating life was more than the same change would be in other nations. The Arab, beyond all races, was ever keen for and glorying in a fight. As soon as he took to the land, however, he forgot this. We find in the great Arab colonies intended to be the nursery of the Arab army after a few years the greatest repugnance to military life. Of turbulence there was plenty, but turbulence was a poor substitute for martial vigour. Admixture of race did much; climate did more but the change of method of life probably did most. Nor did they make the best of cultivators. As far as we know, it was the indigenous races which did the most of the tilling of the soil and were the best agriculturalists. In Egypt to this day, it is the old Fellaheen (become a Mussulman generally, it is true) that cultivate the field. The so-called Arab who is a resident of Cairo, Alexandria and the other towns has but little of the old ancestral virtues.

What were the reasons of the marvellous results brought about by the Arab in the seventh century? Events such as then happened do not come into existence without a propelling cause. Only a part of the answer is to be found in the decline of the Roman Power. True it is that in Italy its original seat and for many years its backbone, there were no more Romans or Latins, but a motley crowd in which the Goths predominated. And the Goths and other powers, although they had come into possession of the countries of the Western Empire, had not with these inherited the genius of Roman administration. In the East, too, the races were

taxed to the utmost; the religious opinions of the inhabitants of Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and North Africa were not those of Byzantium and the yoke of Constantinople was found exceedingly severe. But this is only a part of auswer. It is true much of the Roman Empire was like ripe fruit, ready to drop in anyone's mouth. But how did the Arab become the person into whose mouth the fruit dropped? Why did he of all races inherit the larger part of the Eastern Empire? Never before in history did this race, the Arab race pure and simple, play any great part in the world's history, and after two to three hundred years, we find it dropping out of the world's history again. It should not be forgotten that after these centuries, Seljuk and Central Asian, Turk and Berber, and not the Arab, who supported the burden of Islamic power. There is, as far as I know, no parallel to this sudden rush to dominion in the world's history. Certainly neither the story of Gothic or Hunnish conquest offers a fit comparison. The Arab brought with him an amount of ideas which took the place largely of those of the countries it conquered. Of destruction he brought but little. Goth and Hun, on the other hand, destroyed much, and as to ideas they imbibed the ideas of the conquered in every sphere of human knowledge but imparted practically none.

The answer will be found largely in the character of the Arab himself. For many years the Southern Arab had been one of the great traders of the world. From time immemorial Arab ships had traded with the Persian Gulf and Western India and had also for many a year visited the Malay Peninsula

and probably China. Yemen had been a powerful commercial State long before the Christian era. And trade, in particular sea trade, always develops the intellectual powers. The Arab, the Semite *par excellence*, was, and is, naturally a man of considerable mental power, and this secular trade of his was well fitted to evolve this to the utmost. Now, add to this capacity, a sudden dominant driving faith, the faith that removes mountains, and a fit instrument to hand in the warlike tribes of Central Arabia. These were distinct, though both of the great Semite race, and the combination explains clearly enough the sudden burst of glory which came from Medina and Mecca.

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